the weekly Standard

JANUARY 3 / JANUARY 10, 2011

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THE DEMOCRATS' CATASTROPHIC SUCCESS
NOEMIE EMERY

A WORLD IN CRISIS

What the Thirties Tell Us About Today

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

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The Year of Reagan

The Scrapbook enjoys historic anniversaries, among other things, and the new year always affords us an opportunity to look ahead—or, more properly, to look back. Sometimes it's a shock to realize that something happened a full half-century ago, or that so-and-so turns 75 this year. No harm done, in The Scrapbook's opinion, to consider where we've been or ponder where we're going.

But for readers of The Weekly Standard, the big anniversary this year has got to be the Ronald Reagan Centennial. Our 40th president was born in Tampico, Illinois, on February 6, 1911. Mark your calendars.

To put that into some chronological perspective, his birth is as remote from us today as the Madison administration (1809-17) was from the growing Reagan family at the time of Ronald's birth. The Civil War had ended 46 years earlier—the equivalent of 1965 to us—and no one had yet heard of the *Titanic* or read *Babbitt* or listened to anything on the radio. The Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire in New York—in which 146 young women, mostly immigrants, perished—would not occur for another six weeks. It was the year Gustav Mahler and Carrie Nation died; and Ginger Rogers, Hubert Humphrey, Jean Harlow, and William Golding all were born, along with Ronald Reagan.

To be sure, anniversaries of this sort are fundamentally meaningless. The importance of Ronald Reagan is not his birth, or his age, but his public career, especially his presidency—which, while recent in The Scrapbook's recollection, nevertheless began 30 years ago! An entire political generation has come of age in the three decades since he defeated Jimmy Carter for reelection. Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, for example, was nine years old when Reagan entered the White House. In that year, Republicans gained control of the Senate for the first time since 1954—a 26-year interval—but it would not be until five years after Reagan's two terms (1994) that Democratic control of the House would finally end.

The Scrapbook was amused, during this past political year, by the active part the late Ronald Reagan played in the elections. As always, there was general agreement among the chattering classes that the Republican party had fallen under the spell of dangerous right-wing extremists, and The Scrapbook had to rub its eyes in wonderment at media invocations of good old, moderate, nonpartisan, pragmatic Ronald Reagan—you know, the "principled" conservative who nullified extremists within his own party and swapped Irish jokes with Speaker Tip O'Neill.

Such a Ronald Reagan existed, of course, but you would not have known that by listening to those same people when Reagan actually was president. In those days, he was the personification of the Republican party's dangerous right-wing extremism, the "amiable dunce" and bewildered ex-star of *Bedtime for Bonzo* whose domestic agenda was actively repressive and whose foreign policy was inspired by the then-popular Rambo movies.

While The Scrapbook isn't sure if the acronym RINO had yet been invented, there were also people who, in the early 1980s, thought Reagan had been captured and held hostage ("Let Reagan be Reagan") by such left-wing colleagues as Vice President George H.W. Bush and Chief of Staff James Baker.

We could go on, of course, but only to prove the point that times do change, but some things never do, and that a hundred years can seem like a very long time ago—or just like yesterday. In any event, The Scrapbook is setting aside some jelly beans for February 6, and something a little stronger to wash them down. ♦

O Come O Come Vladimir

Despite their importance, the Christmas culture wars can be tiresome. Some municipality takes down a creche on the city hall lawn, and while we should be outraged, it can be hard to work up the indignation after the 900th time. Well, Seattle's Fremont neighborhood is here to help.

Every year Fremont holds a ceremony to mark the beginning of the holiday season. This year's event, held on December 3, was sponsored by the Fremont Chamber of Commerce, a local music group (the Rabbit Stew String Band), and one of the neighborhood websites, Fremocentrist.com. A fairly large group—judging by the video, perhaps a couple hundred people—gathered for the celebration. How do the good people of Fremont (they call themselves Fremonsters) mark the

REAGAN: KENT LEMON / LENIN: NEWSCOM

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beginning of the Christmas season? They light a star over a 16-foot, 7-ton bronze statue of Vladimir Lenin.

The story of the Fremont Lenin begins in 1988, when it was installed outside a hospital in Poprad, Czechoslovakia. After the Velvet Revolution, Czechs took the statue down and sent it to the scrap heap, where it belonged. But a traveling Fremonster, Lewis Carpenter, saw it and decided to take it home. He had it imported to Seattle in 1993, but died before he could figure out what to do with it, leaving the disassembled statue lying in his backyard. His estate thought they might melt it down and sell the bronze, but a local sculptor convinced them to let him put Lenin back together again. The sculptor in turn got a local business owner to donate a place near the neighborhood's Sunday market for Lenin to be displayed. He has stood there since 1995. (The statue is still, technically, for sale.)

Back then, Fremont had a boring old Christmas tree-lighting ceremony. But in 2004 the Fremonsters decided it would be way cooler to mark the birth of Christ the Savior by lighting a red neon star over Lenin's head. It is difficult to tell if they were motivated primarily by hipsterism, irony, faddishness, foolishness, or anti-Americanism. Last year, the red star broke; at this year's ceremony it was replaced by a blue star of David.

Kwanzaa never looked so good. ♦

Whiskey Tango Foxtrot

Bureaucrats around Washington speak their own language—part English and part what The Scrapbook likes to call TLA (three-letter acronyms). Acronyms are usually an obfuscatory idiom—a lingo that is meant to be a little difficult for outsiders to follow. But with the news that the CIA has created a WikiLeaks Task Force, we wonder if waggish Central Intelligence Agency staffers are trying to send a message that, for a change, outsiders will find relatively easy to decode. The acronym in this case, of course, is the familiar online expletive WTF—probably as concise a description as any of the U.S. government's reaction to Julian Assange's project.

According to the *Washington Post*, the new task force aims "to assess the impact of the exposure of thousands of U.S. diplomatic cables and military files by WikiLeaks." The Scrapbook wishes them well in this effort: It would be good to mitigate any harm that may come to those abroad who, having been of assistance to American diplomats and soldiers in what they thought was anonymity, now find their names recklessly exposed in leaked military and diplomatic files.

And if it is the case that the CIA chose the name of its new task force with the acronym in mind, The Scrapbook can only respond, LOL. ♦

Military Recruiting (cont.)

A couple of weeks ago, The Scrapbook noted "research" published in the latest issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* asking the question, "Should We End Military Recruiting in High Schools as a Matter of Child Protection and Public Health?" Whatever the dreams of left-wing public health agitators, this is a movement going nowhere in a hurry.

The left-most federal appeals

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court, the Ninth Circuit, last week struck down as unconstitutional ordinances in two California towns, Arcata and Eureka, that purported "to bar the federal government from 'recruit[ing], initiat[ing] contact with for the purpose of recruiting, or promot[ing] the future enlistment of any person under the age of eighteen into any branch of the United States Armed Forces.'"

The court held that "the Constitution expressly provides Congress with the power to 'raise and support Armies' and to 'make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces.' . . . And the Supreme Court has made clear that the federal government 'can determine, without question from any State authority, how the armies shall be raised.'" UCLA law professor Eugene Volokh commented at his eponymous volokh.com blog: "This strikes me as exactly correct. The federal government is acting well within its enumerated powers, and state governments and their local subdivisions may not interfere with it." ♦

Annals of Academe

The journal of *Social Psychological and Personality Science* has some blockbuster research in its latest issue: a paper headlined "Subtly Different Positive Emotions Can Be Distinguished by Their Facial Expressions."

Yes, The Scrapbook grinned, subtly, when it saw that. And on that note, dear readers, let us wish you much happiness—and many different positive emotions—in the new year. ♦

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Blues Brother

I once took a road trip to Clarksdale, Mississippi, a Delta town in the northwestern corner of the state known primarily—okay, known only—as the epicenter of the blues.

My lifelong best friend Drew and I set out from our hometown in suburban Atlanta across the states of the Deep South. We drove through Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi practically all the way to the river. It's an eight-hour trip that after Birmingham runs through 250 miles of mostly flat farmland. I remember thinking, as we passed the first highway exit in 18 miles, Clarksdale better be worth it.

We had a general idea of our mission: We would arrive in the evening and hit the town. We were bound to find bouncing clubs pumping out the sweet sounds of that familiar three-chord progression.

Clarksdale wouldn't have the saxed up blues of the genre's later development. This would be the country blues, the real, raw stuff—guitar, bass, drums, maybe a blues harp, and most definitely an old black local sitting with his acoustic, growling out some guttural lamentation. This was going to be the musical equivalent of watching a ballgame at Fenway before the designated hitter rule, with Yaz at the plate and Jim Rice on deck.

Clarksdale was plenty authentic. The downtown strip was lined with midcentury brick buildings that probably hadn't been abandoned, though you couldn't be sure. That certainly went for the Ground Zero Blues Club, the venue recommended by the travel guide at our motel.

It was in a stand-alone, two-story building with brown butcher's paper covering the windows on the inside. The façade was white brick and had been needing a coat of paint for about 50 years. On the front porch were several worn-out couches. The place looked like it had the blues, although I found out later that it's part-owned by Mississippi native and movie star Morgan Freeman, so this may have reflected some Hollywood creative influence.

MICHAEL SLOAN

Drew and I went in around 7:30. Some local boys were sitting at the bar, and a waitress was serving a couple of tables. We took a table in a dark corner near the stage and ordered two beers and some barbecue pork sandwiches, wondering when the music would begin. Finally the bandleader walked on stage. He announced that tonight would be an open stage night. If you play an instrument or sing, he said, come tell us what you play.

For a while, no one jumped in. Drew prodded me. I had several years' experience playing blues guitar. That moment of awkward silence—and that prod—was my cue. Anyone could see the people needed to hear the blues that night, so I walked over and signed up.

My name was called first, and I climbed onto the stage. I strapped on the hollowbody guitar and looked out toward the audience, by now about two dozen people. Suddenly, I was on the field at Fenway, at bat with the ghost of Ted Williams hovering overhead. I savored the moment.

Then the rhythm section started up an easy shuffle in A, and the bandleader handed me a pick, and it was time to play. I'm sure my B.B. King impression (guitar, not voice) wasn't half great, but it wasn't half bad, either. And before I knew it, we rolled into a slow jam in E, and there I was, scaling pentatonically up and down the guitar neck like a seasoned pro.

The bandleader, at the end of the second song, asked me if I was sure I wasn't from Clarksdale. That must be what he tells every poor sap that gets on stage, but I loved it anyway. When I was finished and went back to our table, I saw the crowd had grown, and people were clapping their hands and singing along. After a few more volunteers and several more numbers, I went back up for a final song, accompanied on vocals by a local man with considerably fewer teeth and more blues experience than I have. We jammed until he couldn't sing anymore and my fingers ached.

Now Clarksdale is giving me ideas, and I hear there are some excellent blues clubs in Chicago. I feel another road trip coming on.

Michael Warren

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Don't Fret, Don't Whine

There's been some hyperventilating among conservatives about the effects on the military of repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell. It's going to be amazingly difficult to implement, some say. It could well be the end of the U.S. military as a feared fighting force. It's just another step in the decline of the West.

Reacting to this, Cassy Fiano, a conservative blogger whose Marine husband is serving in Afghanistan, asked last week: "At what point does concern [about the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell] turn into hysterics, and when does it become insulting to our honorable men and women in uniform?"

Fiano's advice to conservatives? Cool it. We join in her suggestion.

Fiano was, as were we, opposed to the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. But she's right to call out people like the "expert" commentator from the professional right who suggested that as many as half a million service members might quit as a result of repeal. And she's right to lambaste the writer—a self-proclaimed admirer of the U.S. military—who argued that he now has no choice but to "actively encourage men and women to leave—in droves."

Fortunately, and needless to say, our men and women in uniform will ignore such "encouragement." They're made of much sterner stuff than some of their self-proclaimed admirers seem to think.

As Fiano writes, it's a "massive insult to our military" to assume that soldiers can't handle the challenge of integrating openly gay troops. True, this is a burden they might have been spared while fighting two wars. But they'll deal with it. As General James Amos, commandant of the Marine Corps and an opponent of repeal, said shortly after the legislation passed:

A U.S. Marine stands guard.

> The Marine Corps will step out smartly to faithfully implement this new policy. I, and the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, will personally lead this effort, thus ensuring the respect and dignity due all Marines. On this matter, we look forward to further demonstrating to the American people the discipline and loyalty that have been the hallmark of the United States Marine Corps for over 235 years.

Fiano observes that Gen. Amos "is putting service before his own objections," and comments, "Many Marines, soldiers, sailors, and airmen will likely do the exact same thing."

President Obama said last week, speaking "to all Americans": "Your country needs you, your country wants you, and we will be honored to welcome you into the ranks of the finest military the world has ever known." Our fine servicemen and women won't quit, they won't whine, they won't fret, and they won't cause a scene. Conservatives owe it to them to conduct ourselves with the same composure and dignity.

—*William Kristol*

Semper Phi

With the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, elite colleges now have a chance to make good on their promises and bring the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) back to campus.

For the past four decades, ROTC has been barred from some of the nation's most prestigious schools, including Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and Stanford. The program was first pushed off campus in the 1960s and '70s in protest of the Vietnam war, and has been kept off campuses in protest of government policy excluding men and women who are openly homosexual from serving in the military. With Congress having now overturned that policy, ROTC's return to these campuses has become a real possibility. "I look forward to pursuing discussions with military officials and others to achieve Harvard's full and formal recognition of ROTC," Harvard president Drew Gilpin Faust said in a statement. Columbia's Lee Bollinger likewise celebrated the legislation: "We now have the opportunity for a new era in the relation-

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ship between universities and our military services."

Achieving formal recognition for ROTC on elite campuses will be an important victory. Not only will it reduce many of the administrative hurdles that cadets on these campuses currently have to navigate, it will also eliminate some of the more backhanded arrangements the various universities created to justify their acceptance of ROTC dollars. For example, Harvard's practice has been to "allow" patriotic alumni to pay cadets' ROTC fees through a private trust fund—a fund established in good measure to give the university "plausible deniability" that it was endorsing ROTC.

As welcome as these changes will be, however, the lifting of the ban against ROTC will be a lost opportunity unless advocates press both universities and the military for more substantive changes, and ensure that words of support are followed by concrete action. Absent such a push, the universities and the military likely will stick with something very close to the status quo, in which token, light-footprint programs continue to operate largely on neighboring campuses.

The chief hurdle is that bringing ROTC to campus is expensive. Several liberal commentators and faculty have recently observed—with more than a touch of triumph—that a money-strapped Pentagon is unlikely to establish new units where there has been such limited student interest. The universities will open the doors, these commentators argue, but the military will say no.

An ROTC cadet rappels at the University of Tampa.

NEWSCOM

At the same time, however, top military leadership has become increasingly aware of—and vocal about—the social costs associated with current policy. In a speech at Duke University last September, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates noted that the military's limited presence in the Northeast and urban areas has left large swaths of the country "void of relationships and understanding of the armed forces." Admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has likewise expressed his interest in "exploring a greater ROTC presence across the country, but particularly in those places where we are underrepresented demographically." If the Pentagon is serious about these "costs," it will have to push its own manpower bureaucracy to invest in a more balanced officer corps.

Elite universities, in turn, clearly have an important role to play in redressing the growing social and geographic imbalances within the military. While the Pentagon must be willing to step forward, universities can also shoulder some of the costs involved in renewing their ROTC programs. With their considerable resources, elite universities certainly could offer incentives on par with, or even better than, those provided by other schools: office and training space, financial aid supplements for ROTC scholarships, room and board for cadets, and so on.

Faculty can help bring ROTC into mainstream campus life by offering appropriate academic credit for ROTC coursework, particularly in advanced subject areas. The common objection among faculty is that the ROTC curriculum is too vocational. This objection merits revisiting, however, as universities have increasingly allowed credit for professional or vocational courses. At Stanford, students can receive credit for internships; at Yale for teacher certification programs; at Columbia, with its new finance major, for accounting classes. Furthermore, there's no reason faculty cannot work with the military to enhance the ROTC curriculum and develop rigorous offerings in such relevant fields as political science, anthropology, or economics. Universities could put this opportunity to even greater use by strengthening their course offerings in weak subject areas, such as military and diplomatic history.

Top-tier schools should aim to have top-tier ROTC programs. In so doing, they would help ensure that the American officer corps reflects America as a whole—thereby allowing ROTC to fulfill its original purpose. No less important, returning ROTC to elite university campuses will restore a proud tradition of military service. When the first ROTC units were established at the land grant colleges, students at Harvard, Yale, and other prominent schools petitioned for their own programs so they too might have the chance to demonstrate their patriotism. And serve they did. Yale's Memorial Hall is covered from floor to ceiling with the names of students and faculty who fought from World War I through the Vietnam war, while Harvard boasts the highest number of Medal of Honor recipients outside the service academies.

Not everyone agrees with the decision to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell. But its repeal does provide an opening for repairing relations between some of the nation's top universities and the military services—a rift that has been unhealthy for universities, their students, and the armed forces. It's an opportunity that shouldn't go to waste.

—Gary Schmitt & Cheryl Miller

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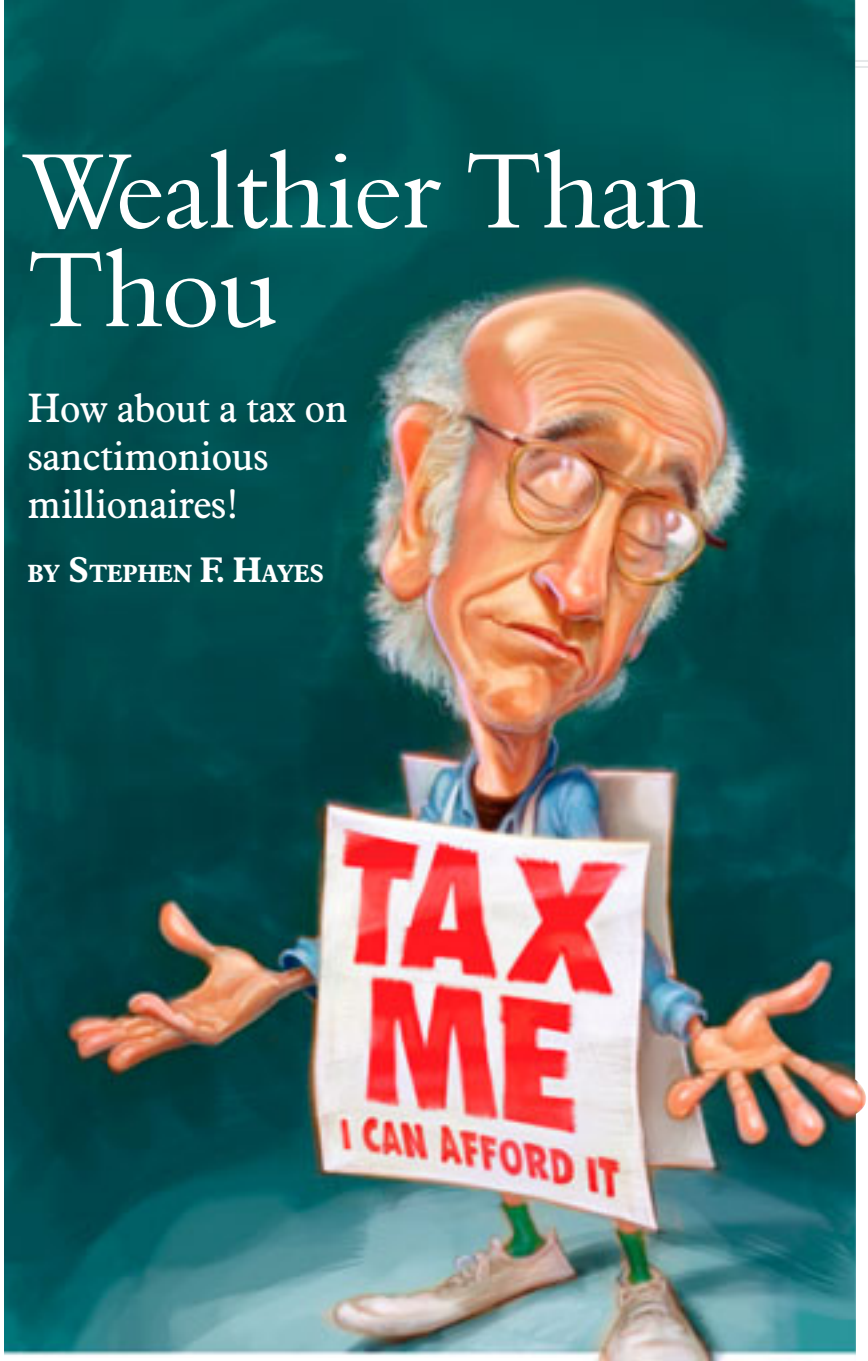
Wealthier Than Thou

How about a tax on sanctimonious millionaires!

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES



GARY LOCKE

During the final two months of 2010, the United States enjoyed what was perhaps the most sustained public discussion of debt and deficits in a generation. Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson, the co-chairs of President Obama's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, released their provocative report. Former Clinton administration budget director Alice Rivlin and noted Republican deficit hawk Paul Ryan put out a comprehensive debt reduction proposal. Mitch Daniels, governor of Indiana and a potential 2012 Republican presidential candidate, offered specific proposals to reform the entitlements that are most responsible for driving the country deep into the red.

My favorite contribution to this national conversation came from "Patriotic Millionaires for Fiscal Strength," an ad hoc organization of several dozen really rich people who want to raise taxes on other really rich people (and themselves). Among those who count themselves Patriotic Millionaires: the one-named, ambient-rock star Moby, Ben Cohen of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, George Zimmer, the gravelly voiced CEO of Men's Wearhouse, and other really rich people who are presumably no less patriotic for being much less famous.

The PMFS acknowledged that raising taxes on the rich was not the most significant fiscal issue facing lawmakers. But, they argued, higher taxes were nonetheless essential in "establishing the discipline we will need to secure our country's fiscal strength." So they leapt into action, launching a website (www.fiscalstrength.org) to raise money to buy airtime for a 30-second TV spot urging that the government make them pay higher taxes.

But times like this require something more, so they didn't just register a domain name and put out a virtual tin cup. Anyone can do that. These selfless souls risked exposing their wealth and altruism to national publicity by addressing a letter to the president. It read:

> We are writing to urge you to stand firm against those who would put politics ahead of their country. For the fiscal health of our nation and the well-being of our fellow citizens, we ask that you allow tax cuts on incomes over $1,000,000 to expire at the end of this year as scheduled. We make this request as loyal citizens who now or in the past earned an income of $1,000,000 per year or more. We have done very well over the last several years. Now, during our nation's moment of need, we are eager to do our fair share. We don't need more tax cuts, and we understand that cutting our taxes will increase the deficit and the debt burden carried by other taxpayers. The country needs to meet its financial obligations in a just and responsible way.

Alas, as we know, those who would put politics ahead of their country prevailed when the Bush tax cuts were not allowed to expire. The selfish and myopic politicians responsible for this travesty hid behind so-called "economic" arguments—similar to President Obama's contention back in the summer of 2009 that raising taxes in a

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recession was "the last thing you want to do." In the end, despite the warnings of these self-described patriots, Washington caved and extended the current tax rates for everyone, with the disastrous result that now all Americans, including greedy small business owners who can only aspire to become millionaires, will get to keep more of the money they've earned.

That was the last straw for funnyman Larry David. "THERE is a God," the mastermind behind *Seinfeld* wrote recently in the *New York Times* op-ed pages, deploying his trademark sarcasm on behalf of a grateful nation. "The Bush tax cuts have been extended two years for the upper bracketeers, of which I am a proud member," he continued. Indeed, in 1998 alone David earned $242 million when *Seinfeld* was sold into syndication for $1.7 billion, making him number two on *Forbes*' celebrity earnings list that year.

David is also the star of HBO's *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, a show about a self-involved Hollywood celebrity whose relentless narcissism renders him incapable of seeing the world as anything beyond his small-minded obsessions. "I was planning a trip to Cabo with my kids for Christmas vacation," David confided to *Times* readers. "We were going to fly coach, but now with the money I'm saving in taxes, I'm going to splurge and bump myself up to first class. First class!"

The good news is that even though U.S. taxpayers are now unfairly forced to keep more of their own earnings, there is something Larry David and other progressive patriots with a few million to burn can do about it.

The Treasury Department's Bureau of Public Debt has a fund called Gift Contributions to Reduce Debt Held by the Public, to which David and his friends can conveniently contribute online at www.pay.gov. But given their patriotism, they'll probably prefer to mail a check—you know, to support the U.S. Postal Service, some $8.5 billion in the red—to:

Attn Dept G
Bureau of the Public Debt
P.O. Box 2188
Parkersburg, WV 26106-2188

The Treasury keeps a running total of these gifts, and it is worth noting that despite the very public exhortations made by these loyal citizens so eager to do their fair share, the annual sums have been little more than a rounding error on Larry David's 1040. For tax year 2010, the total to date is $2,840,466.75—though there is still some time to match the $3,063,057.05 donated last year, when, presumably, celebrity patriotic millionaires were feeling especially civic-minded.

There is, of course, another advantage to showing your commitment to the country's fiscal strength in this way. By quietly giving their money directly to the federal government, patriotic millionaires can avoid all of the unwanted attention to their wealth and righteousness that comes with taking such a public position. ♦

A Fresh Start for a New Year

By Thomas J. Donohue
President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

In recent weeks, President Obama and his team have worked hard to demonstrate a new openness to working with the business community. This includes reaching an agreement with South Korea that clears the way for moving a free trade agreement forward and a compromise on taxes that resulted in the extension of current rates for two years. While policy differences on some key issues will undoubtedly continue, here are some issues on which the U.S. Chamber anticipates working with the administration in 2011.

Trade. One item that should be at the top of the president's 2011 to-do list is putting America back into the discussion when it comes to trade. The pending trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama are a logical place to start. If Congress fails to pass these agreements, we run the risk of losing more than 380,000 American jobs as our overseas competitors make inroads in these critical markets. Mr. President, if you move the ball forward on trade, the U.S. Chamber will help you gather the votes on Capitol Hill.

Infrastructure. The administration and the business community alike know that infrastructure—America's economic platform—has fallen into a state of disrepair. Americans spend too much time sitting in traffic or waiting on the tarmac, businesses have trouble maintaining efficient supply chains, and too many lives are lost in preventable accidents. This must change immediately. Passing a highway and transit bill with sufficient funding is an imperative. So, too, is removing the legal and regulatory roadblocks that stand in the way of private investments in infrastructure.

Education. To stay competitive in the 21st century economy, America must take advantage of its most important natural resource—its people. President Obama understands this and has been a leader on education reform. The Race to the Top education initiative has incentivized states to make long-needed reforms, and efforts to strengthen STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education will help prepare students for the workforce. The Chamber looks forward to working with the administration on furthering a reform agenda that puts student success above all else.

President Obama's welcome efforts on some business priorities are encouraging. But this renewed emphasis on jobs and the economy must be pursued vigorously and consistently. We won't agree with the administration on every issue—not by a long shot—but it will never be personal with us. We stand ready to work with the president and the new Congress to strengthen business, the economy, and the American Dream. The sooner we start, the better.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Comment at www.chamberpost.com.

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The Logic of Our Iran Sanctions

Accelerate them now.

BY REUEL MARC GERECHT & MARK DUBOWITZ

Even before the recent inconclusive nuclear talks with Iran in Geneva, President Barack Obama undoubtedly agreed with France's national security adviser, Jean-David Levitte, when he described Tehran's approach to nuclear negotiations with the West as a "farce" and the dictatorship of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei as "fascist." More aggressively than any president since Jimmy Carter, Obama has used sanctions against the Islamic Republic. The White House and the State Department have deployed a "coalition of the willing." Washington has assiduously avoided punishing any major European, Russian, or Chinese transgressor of U.S.-mandated sanctions; rather, the administration has chosen to encourage compliance by underscoring the common threat of an Iranian bomb while suggesting that an American economic hammer, wielded by an increasingly pugnacious Congress, will eventually come down on malefactors.

Administration officials will tell you that the president aims only to coerce Khamenei into a compromise; privately, they'll admit that his aim is to contain a nuclear Iran if sanctions fail to stop uranium enrichment. But few in the administration now believe that Khamenei will compromise unless sanctions endanger his regime. And containment, which is what Washington does when it wants to wage war without direct confrontation, is a regime-change strategy: Political and economic isolation is designed to nurture Iran's convulsive internal contradictions, vividly on display after the June 12, 2009, elections. The contentious issue in Iran policy isn't the goal—do we want Khamenei and his Revolutionary Guards to fall? Democrats and Republicans differ on this far less than they did when President George W. Bush saw an "axis of evil." The issue is timing: Can we put enough pressure on Khamenei and his praetorians to either crack the regime or make the supreme leader believe that the nuclear program actually threatens his rule?

The administration may try to avoid the inevitable—sanctions that significantly curtail the export of Iranian oil—by playing with the idea that the West and Tehran can settle for some enrichment inside the Islamic Republic that doesn't allow for processing the quality and quantity of uranium for nuclear weapons. But such a "compromise" doesn't pass the pinch test: There is no way the West can monitor Iranian compliance without an intrusive inspections regime, which Khamenei has adamantly refused. Tehran has often dodged the International Atomic Energy Agency's current, polite inspection procedures and questions about suspicious Iranian behavior. And as the French, who've been deadly serious about nuclear proliferation since the first Gulf war in 1990-91, constantly point out, any enrichment will now allow Tehran the intellectual and mechanical means to advance weaponization. Western advocates of some enrichment are usually the same folks who don't see Khamenei's and the Revolutionary Guards' possession of nuclear weaponry as all that worrisome. If you've already conceded the supreme leader an atomic bomb, enrichment isn't an issue.

A negotiated "deal" with Tehran that concedes Iranian enrichment is a face-saving way for the West to avoid confessing that it would rather risk Khamenei's having a nuke than face the two alternatives: a crippling sanctions regime, which could spike the price of oil, or an American preventive military strike.

But this avenue of escape isn't open to the White House for a few simple reasons. First, such a deal would leave Khamenei apoplectic. Any agreement that would effectively stop the bomb potential of Iran's 20-year nuclear program would be an enormous defeat. It's now clear that the supreme leader wasn't particularly fond of the nuclear talks with the European Union that began in 2003. Those talks, which dead-ended in 2005, became unacceptable when EU demands for a (temporary) suspension of uranium enrichment and the "Additional Protocol"—providing for intrusive inspections—became unavoidable. Since the elections of June 12, 2009, we have watched the supreme leader unleash his security forces to torture his country into political quiescence. He has manhandled, driven into exile, and imprisoned most of the "moderate" forces with whom the West once hoped to deal. Seyyed Hossein Mousavian, one of the architects of the enrichment-pausing "Paris Agreement" of November 2004, now lives in exile in the United States, having fled Iran with his family. Has Khamenei triumphed over his internal enemies only to trade away the historic achievement of his regime? Psychologically, culturally, and religiously, this option for him makes no sense.

Conversely, no one else in the region will believe that a deal that leaves Iranian uranium enrichment in place is anything other than a rout of the West. The "EU-3" nuclear negotiations with Iran are the most important diplomatic undertaking that Brussels has attempted. (France, Great Britain,

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and Germany have represented the EU in these talks.) The Europeans, like the Americans, like the United Nations Security Council, have stated repeatedly and clearly that uranium enrichment by Iran without a full accounting of its nuclear program and complete access by IAEA inspectors to Iran's known and suspected nuclear facilities is "unacceptable." Such an enrichment "compromise" now would most likely guarantee that the Saudis would remind the nuclear-armed Pakistanis that it's time for a little brotherly, Sunni Muslim tech transfer. The odds that others—especially the Egyptians and Turks—will also start down the nuclear path aren't small. And unless Benjamin Netanyahu and much of Jerusalem's political elite are just bluffing, the countdown for an Israeli preventive strike starts when the West concedes uranium enrichment to the supreme leader and his Revolutionary Guards.

And third, such a deal politically offers Obama nothing. Many Democrats and most Republicans would pounce on him for agreeing to "monitored" Iranian enrichment, which would likely collapse before American negotiators could fly home. The U.S.-led sanctions regime has shown that Washington can still have a significant impact on the Islamic Republic's economy and politics (the foreign minister just got fired, and to minimize the impact of sanctions, the regime is cutting gasoline subsidies, which will either save the treasury billions or lead to crushing inflation). The near-miraculous attack of the centrifuge-destroying Stuxnet virus has bought the administration time and further strengthened those who want to use sticks to stop Khamenei's nuclear aspirations.

In Washington, an unrelenting sanctions logic has developed. It has also anchored itself in Ottawa and jumped the Atlantic and the Pacific. United Nations Security Council resolution 1929 has been much more powerful than the three resolutions before it because the Europeans, the Japanese, and the South Koreans have chosen to interpret it more aggressively than they have in the past. The trick for Washington now is how to ratchet up significantly the pain in Tehran while encouraging our allies to continue to do more than they'd originally thought possible. The administration may be right (though we remain skeptical): As long as the Americans, the Europeans, and some of the big Asian players are voluntarily implementing more and more sanctions, the cumulative effect may be a punishing tidal wave, which any transgressions by the Chinese, Russians, and our allies are powerless to stop. Washington needs an incremental approach—implemented rapidly—that does not spook the oil markets and that allows for the market and increasing oil supplies from Iran's competitors to dull the effect of less Iranian crude being traded. We need to continue to invest the Europeans in the project, allowing them to own, as they have since 2003, negotiations with the Islamic Republic.

Iran's first offshore drilling platform, 2009

REUTERS

Thinking always of Khamenei's Achilles' heel, Washington should aim its efforts at cutting foreign Iranian crude oil purchases. The Europeans have already cut tech transfers to and future investments in Iranian oil and natural gas, severely damaging Tehran's ability to sustain current production. The Chinese, while backfilling on some of these investment deals, are sharply reducing their purchases of Iranian crude. China cut crude imports from Iran between January and September 2010 by approximately 17 percent from the same period in 2009, even as the world's biggest energy consumer bought more oil. Japan, too, is cutting back. The Japanese reduced purchases of Iranian crude by over 19 percent in the first eight months of 2010; in August alone, Japan cut its purchases by 31 percent. While Iran was Japan's third- largest supplier of oil in June 2010, by August of this year it was in sixth place. Neither the Japanese nor the Chinese want to bet their economic security on an Iranian energy sector in rapid decline.

The administration can greatly intensify the "hassle factor" in buying Iranian crude by exposing the role of the Revolutionary Guards in the crude-oil export supply chain—and then using the law prohibiting commerce with the Guards to sanction foreign enterprises involved with them. The Treasury Department's recent decision to sanction the Pars Oil and Gas Company, which is a Revolutionary Guard front company involved in gasoline trading and the development of some of the largest oil and natural gas fields in the Middle East, is a good example of the type of punitive designation that can greatly complicate Iran's energy planning.

Using the preamble of Security Council resolution 1929, which establishes the nexus between Iran's cash-generating energy sector and the sanctioned nuclear program, the United States and its allies can also pass additional measures to prohibit long-term purchase contracts for Iranian oil and natural gas. And large up-front cash payments by foreign companies for Iranian oil and natural gas can be banned, as well as any energy bond issued by an Iranian entity (by prohibiting any foreign underwriter, pur-

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chaser, or financial institution from facilitating the issuance of a bond).

Current U.S. and EU rules severely limit investments in the Islamic Republic's oil and natural gas sectors. In the case of U.S. law, the investment limit is $20 million per year. Large upfront cash payments on oil or natural gas purchases give the Iranians instant access to money to invest in their increasingly capital-starved energy sector. And by using long-term supply contracts to collateralize billions of dollars in energy bonds, the regime could circumvent sanctions. Bondholders require evidence that Iran can make payments on bonds, and one simple way to produce such evidence would be to sign a long-term supply contract, using the resulting guaranteed revenue stream in hard currencies to collateralize the paper issued.

The United States and the EU need to close any loopholes that would allow this kind of investment activity. Using the political cover of the preamble of resolution 1929, Washington or the EU can also introduce measures to sanction any pipeline project (and its participating partners) transporting Iranian oil or natural gas, or any shipping company, insurance company, or financial institution that provides support to an Iranian oil or natural gas trade. Needless to say, Washington or the EU can disqualify for any government contracting in America or Europe anyone buying Iranian oil or natural gas. As crude oil and natural gas buyers find it increasingly difficult to use banks to settle or extend credit for Iranian oil and natural gas trades, these buyers will seek alternative sources. Washington can also bar the participation in any U.S. energy deal (shale and offshore leases, for example) of any company that buys or facilitates the purchase of Iranian oil or natural gas. Nor would it be difficult for Western governments to sanction any company participating in overseas energy development or production involving an official Iranian company or any Revolutionary Guard Corps-affiliated entity.

Such punitive measures could significantly reduce the Islamic Republic's ability to export 3.7 million barrels of oil per day, just over 4 percent of daily world demand. Provided the United States and its allies could get more oil on the market—the Iran-loathing Saudis could increase production, for example, and more oil from Canada's enormous tar sands could hit the market, and President Obama could lift the moratorium on offshore oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico—then the world oil market would have considerably more elasticity than does the Iranian economy, which is already under stress.

Some of the possibilities above have been introduced into the Sherman-Casey-Brown bill in Congress. It would probably take little time for this legislation and other measures like it to cause a financial crisis in Tehran the likes of which the mullahs have not seen since the Iran-Iraq war.

The issue for the Obama administration is whether it will have the foresight to accelerate sanctions that are probably coming in any case. The next round of Euro-American talks with Iran is scheduled for January. Gary Samore, the White House's nuclear proliferation point man, has already let it be known that more sanctions are on the way. Yet it is one thing for the administration to know intellectually that Khamenei will not buckle without the severest pain; it is another matter to overcome the State Department's love of diplomatic gradualism. Anyone who has spoken to administration officials who are doggedly trying to stop the Iranian bomb knows how easily the love of the sanctions process can turn that process into an end in itself. But the key to successful diplomacy with Khamenei's Iran is to view engagement as the supreme leader does: All scenarios are win-lose. If the West is to stop Tehran's quest for a nuke, it must convince the supreme leader, and the Revolutionary Guards who oversee Iran's nuclear program, that their pursuit of the bomb will destroy the regime.

When dealing with Tehran, it's always good to remember Ruhollah Khomeini, whose iron-willed charisma gave birth to the Islamic Republic. The ayatollah relented in his war against Saddam Hussein, who'd invaded Iran in 1980, when he finally saw that the conflict would destroy his new nation. One of the men who convinced Khomeini that Iran had to sue for peace was Khamenei. He understood that the Islamic Republic could not possibly win with the West—especially the United States—aligned against it. (The accidental downing of Iran Air Flight 655 by the USS *Vincennes* in the Persian Gulf in July 1988 was viewed as an intentional, heart-stopping act of war by Tehran's ruling elite.) Khamenei undoubtedly remembers what it took to break his will—what it took to crack Khomeini's bellicose determination—to fight. The objective of American diplomacy should be to reanimate those memories.

Indirect demand-side sanctions on the Islamic Republic could possibly accomplish what an embargo could do without the diplomatic trauma. If the European Union can lay the groundwork for the slow-motion death of Iran's oil and gas exploration business, which it already has, it can probably see its way to further constricting Iran's energy sector. Nuclear counterproliferation is a holy of holies for Europeans. This is even truer in Washington, where surrender just isn't an option for a Democratic president soon facing reelection.

So let us see whether Khamenei can withstand a united West. With these sanctions, we just might not need the Chinese and the Russians to help out. Even though the Stuxnet virus has bought us some time, Iran's nuclear program is still advancing. The old Persian counsel against complacency and sloth would be wise to remember. *Harcheh zudtar behtar*—the sooner we find out whether we can make the supreme leader conceive again of the awfulness of 1988, when surrender became thinkable, the better. Current sanctions and the regime's atrocious economic management have brought hard times. For the United States and its allies to be successful, the times need to be made a good deal harder still. ♦

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Mr. Farenthold Goes to Washington

The unlikeliest freshman.

BY JOHN MCCORMACK

When the 112th Congress is sworn in on January 5, there may be no better living, breathing reminder of just how big the 2010 Republican wave was than Rep. Blake Farenthold. Written off during the campaign as a longshot at best and a joke at worst, Farenthold ended up narrowly defeating Texas Democrat Solomon Ortiz, a 14-term incumbent who had typically won reelection by more than 20 points in a district that is now 71 percent Hispanic.

"For me, this was the race that put the exclamation point on the cycle," says David Wasserman, who analyzes House races at the *Cook Political Report*. When Wasserman moved the race from the "likely" to the "leans Democratic" category in early October—a more competitive rating than other handicappers gave it—"both party committees told me I was nuts," he says.

It's easy to see why Democrats and Republicans were skeptical of Farenthold. As an unpaid sidekick on a Corpus Christi talk radio show, "Lago in the Morning," he had an unusual résumé. Farenthold told me that, after practicing law and then owning a computer business, he initially got on the radio show by being the "go-to guy whenever there was some issue with computers—sometimes a hacker story or somebody busted for child porn on their computer. I was the expert they would call."

Curly-haired and roly-poly, he was anything but the stereotypical image of a square-jawed congressional candidate. And then, a few weeks before the election, a photo of Farenthold surfaced that was supposed to destroy whatever chances he had of winning: It showed the Republican candidate wearing nothing but duckie pajamas and a goofy grin while posing next to a scantily clad woman in a bar. The Ortiz campaign pounced and put the picture in a TV ad in an attempt to paint Farenthold as a ridiculous party boy.

Blake Farenthold

"Who among us hasn't donned duckie pajamas for a night out with scantily clad women, then run for Congress?" snickered the liberal blog *Talking Points Memo* on October 15, just two days after the National Republican Congressional Committee had elevated Farenthold to its second-tier "contender" status. "Democrats see an opportunity to use Farenthold to lampoon the GOP, which, with help from the media, has advanced the narrative that they've expanded the field of 'in play' races ahead of November," reported *Talking Points Memo*. "Farenthall [sic] is supposedly part of that expanded playing field."

Of course, it was Farenthold who had the last laugh when he pulled off a 799-vote win (a recount barely changed the Election Night margin). The victory surprised many, including, to a certain extent, the congressman-elect. "Early on in the race, I had a nightmare that I won, and now it's like 'Now what do I do?'" Farenthold candidly told a Texas TV station on Election Night.

So how did Farenthold do it? Certainly, the national anti-Democratic mood and the poor economy hurt Ortiz. But there were plenty of Republican candidates who seemed to be in a better position to win than Farenthold, yet didn't pull it off in the end. One thing that made Farenthold's campaign different from many others in 2010 was his decision to directly attack his opponent's record on abortion. "In the general election, we made a big issue of Ortiz's voting on pro-life [issues]," says Farenthold. While Farenthold's campaign hit Ortiz with what little money it had in a TV ad for voting with "liberal pro-abortion politicians in Washington" and even voting for "taxpayer-funded abortions," Ortiz insisted throughout the campaign that he was and always had been pro-life.

Steve Ray, Farenthold's pollster and consultant, told me that Ortiz's vote for Obamacare's final passage was particularly toxic. Before that, Ortiz had never taken a high profile vote in favor of abortion. Ray thinks that the issue moved a significant number of votes in the heavily Hispanic district that stretches along the Gulf coast from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande. Strongly pro-life voters "will vote for someone who is pro-life even if they disagree with someone who is against them on every one else," Ray said. "We actually had signs touting Blake's pro-life position at the polls, and we heard people would walk out"—voters who couldn't vote for a Republican but also couldn't vote for a Democrat who didn't oppose abortion.

Farenthold was also aided by the fact that Ortiz exhibited some of the worst traits of an incumbent. During the health care debate, Ortiz literally phoned it in with a tele-town hall meeting rather than engaging with his

AP

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constituents in person. And although he had faced ethics questions before, during the campaign the congressman was under a new investigation by the House Ethics Committee for his per diem expenditures during overseas taxpayer-funded trips.

In short, a number of issues were working against Ortiz, and his "duckie pajamas" attack ad couldn't save him. Farenthold even thinks the ad backfired. "I started going into places getting recognized a whole lot more," he told me.

Whether or not all the attention was good publicity for Farenthold, it's true that he was strapped for cash—outspent more than 2 to 1—and trailed Ortiz in name identification. Perhaps the ad, while embarrassing to Farenthold, was just too mean to be effective. "They [included] a picture of me with confetti in my hair from a birthday party and a picture of me holding a glass of wine back before I quit drinking," he said, explaining that the duckie pajamas photo was taken at "a pajama party themed birthday party with the proceeds going to charity. . . . Somebody snapped a picture of me with one of the waitresses."

Farenthold is already a top target for Democrats in 2012, but taking him out won't be easy. Texas will gain four House seats in reapportionment, and Farenthold's district may be redrawn to include more Republican voters. And the district, while favorable to local Democrats in the past, is fairly conservative. Obama only won it with 53 percent of the vote in 2008, and George W. Bush won it with 55 percent in 2004.

Farenthold himself could emerge as a stronger candidate with two years of congressional experience under his belt. He's already thoughtful and well-spoken when discussing the issues. On the hot-button issue of immigration, for example, he carefully walks the line of opposing amnesty without sounding like he's anti-immigrant. "The bulk of the people who come to this country either legally or illegally are coming here to live the American dream—to build a better life for themselves and not be a mooch on our welfare system," said Farenthold. "We need to create a system that recognizes the need for immigrants and create a system where if you want to work hard and build a better life for yourself it's a whole lot easier to do."

"But we can't have amnesty," he continued, "because basically that means you can never be able to seal the borders. You can do [amnesty] once, but after you've done it another time, nobody's going to take you seriously when you say you're going to get operational control of the borders."

While Farenthold may be one of the unlikeliest congressmen to emerge from the 2010 election, Democrats would be mistaken to underestimate him the next time around because of one silly picture. Farenthold's campaign was no joke. And neither is he. ♦

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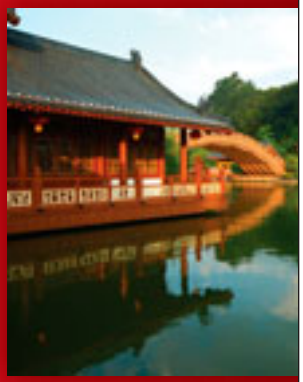
- FY10 Diluted EPS was $0.49
- HQGE currently trades at 8.26x earnings, well below the industry average (Chinese Education Sector trades, on average 25-30x earnings)



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Nullifying Obamacare

Here's one more weapon.

BY FRED BARNES

The vehemence of the opposition to President Obama's overhaul of health care has spawned an assortment of strategies for killing it. The newest and most ambitious would create a health care compact among the states and use it to switch control of health care programs from the federal government to the states.

If that sounds like a long shot, it's no more so than the other schemes for nullifying Obamacare. These include repeal by Congress or by constitutional amendment, lawsuits to strike down Obamacare's individual mandate, and actions by governors and House Republicans to slow down its implementation.

Those are worthy efforts. But a health care compact would do more. If successful—a very big "if"—it would reduce the scope of Washington's power. States, not Congress, the White House, or federal bureaucrats, would set the rules for health care from top to bottom, from Medicare and Medicaid to individual insurance policies.

And as ambitious as that sounds, it's merely the initial goal of the group of conservative activists leading the compact drive. They want to use compacts to return other areas of federal control—the environment, drug and medical device regulation, education, to name three possibilities—to the states or even local governments.

Interstate compacts aren't a wild idea. They just haven't been tapped for such a political purpose before. The authority for compacts was established in the Constitution (Article 1, Section 10), and more than 200 have been set up. One example: the agreement uniting Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia to build and operate the Washington area's Metro subway system.

An issue of interest to two or more states can lead to a compact. It works this way: State legislatures approve a proposal, the states agree on the parts of mutual concern (such as buying insurance across state lines), then the compact is dispatched to Washington for ratification by Congress and the president (though the need for White House assent isn't spelled out in the Constitution). Ratification turns the compact into federal law.

However, there's a bigger reason for forming a compact against Obamacare. By banding together, states would have far more political clout in Washington. Backers of the health care compact figure they need more than 20 states to pressure Washington to go along. Their assumption is members of Congress (even Democrats who support Obamacare) would be inclined to vote for a formal request from their home state. Members who oppose Obamacare would vote for it as well.

The compact strategy grew out of talks last summer among a handful of conservatives worried about the growth in federal power, particularly under President Obama. They chose health care, given its unpopularity, as the issue on which to draw a new line between federal and state authority. Texas attorney Ted Cruz, a former state solicitor general, suggested the use of a compact. "It's certainly a new application" of the compact, Cruz told me.

In October, Eric O'Keefe of the Sam Adams Alliance broached the compact strategy with the leaders of Tea Party Patriots, Mark Meckler and Jenny Beth Martin. And in November, they, in turn, took the idea to their national council, gathered in Washington to conduct an orientation session for newly elected members of Congress (only Republicans showed up).

When O'Keefe and a panel explained the strategy, they got a standing ovation from the 180 members of the council. "I've never heard of a panel getting a standing ovation," O'Keefe says. At least 37 of them signed up as state coordinators for winning legislative approval of the health care compact. An experienced political consultant, Mike Barnhart, was hired as national coordinator.

"We constantly receive ideas from people on what we should do," says Meckler, an attorney specializing in Internet law. After hearing O'Keefe's pitch, he read the American Bar Association's guide on interstate compacts. "Despite the fact that it was very boring," he was struck by how appropriate a tool it could be for slashing the power of the federal government.

The campaign for the compact begins early next month when many state legislatures convene. Texas and Nebraska are among the target states. "There are a lot of good opportunities," Cruz says.

Like the other efforts to snuff out Obamacare, the compact drive is likely to aid Republicans and conservatives by keeping the health care issue alive. That won't help Obama in his reelection campaign. But it could be an effective tool for Republicans in recruiting volunteers and appealing to voters.

But what attracted conservative organizers like O'Keefe and Tea Partiers is how broadly the compact strategy can be used to shrink the power of the federal government. It's an "unused lever point" with enormous potential, O'Keefe says.

"We picked one of the tougher issues," health care, he says, and ratification by Congress and the president is "a big hurdle. But we want the fight. We want the clarity. We want to define the lines of the fight" between Washington and the people. Achieving that won't be easy. But not impossible. ♦

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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A World in Crisis

What the thirties tell us about today

By Matthew Continetti

On December 13, 1931, there was a traffic accident in New York City. A man exited a cab on the Upper East Side and was crossing Fifth Avenue when he was hit by a car traveling around 35 miles an hour. The force of the impact threw the man to the pavement. He struck his head. Two of his ribs were cracked. A crowd formed around him; one of the witnesses hailed a taxi to take the man to the hospital. When he was admitted to Lenox Hill the doctors noted that he was bruised and battered but would make a full recovery. He had cheated death.

The patient remained in the doctors' care for eight days. While he was there the driver who had struck him visited. The patient made it clear that the accident had been his own fault; the driver, an unemployed mechanic, had nothing to fear. The incident had occurred because the patient, an Englishman, had looked left as he crossed the street when he should have looked right. The grateful driver left the hospital carrying an autographed copy of the patient's latest book. The *New York Times* wrote about the meeting the next day. The headline read, "Churchill Greets Driver Who Hit Him."

I've spent the last several weeks reading all sorts of newspaper and magazine articles from December 1931. But I keep coming back to the reports of Winston Churchill's near-fatal mishap. The contingency of the episode is what's striking: After all, if the car had been traveling just a little bit faster, the history of the twentieth century would have been irrevocably altered. Churchill himself was shocked that he had survived the ordeal. "I do not understand," he wrote in an article for the *Daily Mail* dictated from his hospital bed, "why I was not broken like an egg-shell or squashed like a gooseberry."

The story also brings to life the granularity of history. It's easy to think of historical epochs as smooth units with a few overarching characteristics. In the popular imagination the Great Depression began with the crash of '29 and persisted, without interruption, until America entered World War II in 1941. The Great Depression calls to mind Hoover's supposed passivity, Roosevelt's New Deal, the Dust Bowl, and Father Coughlin. We limit the story to America. We don't think of the figures in one historical context as active in another.

But of course things are more complicated than the CliffsNotes versions of history we carry around in our heads. Rather than one big crisis that unfurled over time, the 1930s was a series of rolling crises that coincided with and were shaped by one another. There was not only one thunderclap. There were several. There were moments during the Great Depression, for instance, when the economy improved—only to have the floor fall out from underneath it. There were false springs that quickly turned into harsh winters.

I went looking through the sources from December 1931 because I wanted to see if there were parallels between then and now. Why that particular month? Because it was two years into the Great Depression, just as we are two years into the Great Recession. Needless to say, historical analogies are imperfect. No two eras are alike. But it's nonetheless true that certain themes connect our time with Churchill's. In both eras the crises were global in scope. In both eras the world's financial and political order came under vicious attack. In both eras the question facing elites was whether they could prevent the threatening storm from making landfall. The political class of the 1930s was unable to meet that challenge. And the political class of today?

We'll see.

At first blush, there are several affinities between the domestic political situation in December 2010 and that of December 1931. In both months the president's party had just lost control of the House of Representatives while retaining a slim majority in the Senate. Both Decembers saw fights over taxes, with tax rates rising in the 1930s but staying the same today or in some cases being lowered. Both months witnessed debates over the repeal of controversial social legislation—prohibition in the 1930s, Don't Ask, Don't Tell in our time.

What's more, the presidents in both Decembers shared a couple of qualities. Obviously, Barack Obama is not Herbert

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Hoover. But both men were criticized for being detached, overly logical, aloof. Both men, moreover, were celebrities when they took office. Hoover, the great engineer, was known for his feats as director of aid to Europe after World War I and as secretary of commerce under presidents Harding and Coolidge. Obama was known for being Obama.

Both Hoover and Obama were activist presidents who believed in a progressive social philosophy. This is not to say that Hoover would have been comfortable blogging for an early-'30s version of the *Huffington Post*. Throughout his presidency, he opposed direct relief to the poor and unemployed. He was a reluctant economic interventionist. But the idea that Hoover was a lazy bystander is false. He was in the news all the time. The scope of his initiatives grew as the Depression went on. In his message to Congress in December 1931, for example, he called for a tax increase and the creation of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to spur lending.

On December 27, the *New York Times* reported that Hoover also wanted to "increase the capitalization of the Federal Land Bank System, enlarge the discount facilities of the Federal Reserve System, revise the banking laws to afford greater security to depositors, and increase taxation which he regards as necessary in the existing financial emergency." The reaction to Hoover's plan revealed that snark is not unique to postmodernity. "The president says that we must cushion the shock for our credit institutions (with government cush) so that industry can start moving again," Howard Brubaker quipped in the *New Yorker*. "He is a great believer in federal aid for the unemployers."

While the president haggled with Congress over the details of his revenue package, he was also wrestling with the problem of European war debts. Throughout December 1931, European statesmen were trying to resolve the issue of German reparations in light of the Great Depression. Early in the month, Hoover called for reinstatement of the Versailles-era War Debt Board. A headline in the December 29 *Times* read, "Hoover Ready to Act if Debt Conference Links Our Interests." In the headlines of the time, international politics regularly commingled with domestic news—just as it does in 2010.

And yet it would be wrong to overstate the commonalities between the Great Depression and the Great Recession. The differences are just as significant—if not more so. Most important of all is the difference in magnitude. There really is no comparison between

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Acts to End Terrorism in Bengal; ts May Suspend Right to Public Trial

MANCHURIAN ACCORD NEARER AS CHINESE DROP VITAL DEMAND

Nanking Agrees Not to Ask Date for Evacuation of Japanese Forces.

LEAVES ACTION TO INQUIRY

Council in Paris Session Tries to Obtain Peace by Getting China to Move Out Troops.

CHINESE NOW OPTIMISTIC

Hoover to Ask World Court Vote, Colby Asserts After Interview

SNELL BEATS TILSON IN SPEAKERSHIP RACE

HOOVER'S PROPOSAL ON CREDIT OPPOSED BY RESERVE BANKS

Glass Committee by Questionnaire Gets Consensus on Broader Eligibility of Paper.

STANDARDS HELD HIGH NOW

Suggestion of Curbing Member Bank Borrowings on 15-Day Note Meets Opposition.

SECURITY LOANS DEFENDED

Senators in Close Meeting Lay Ground Work for Bill to Check Stock Speculation.

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the Depression and other modern financial panics. According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the initial contraction lasted a whopping 43 months, from August 1929 to March 1933. During that time American output fell by close to 30 percent. The Great Recession, by comparison, lasted 18 months from December 2007 to June 2009. During that period U.S. gross domestic product contracted by about 4 percent.

In 1931, moreover, the U.S. unemployment rate was 15.9 percent. It would peak in 1933 at 25 percent. During the Great Recession, unemployment rose to 10.1 percent in October 2009 and stood at 9.8 percent in November 2010. What these percentages don't convey, however, is the qualitative difference in unemployment then and unemployment now. There were no "automatic stabilizers" in the early 1930s. There was no unemployment insurance or deposit insurance or Social Security or Medicare or welfare or federal home lending. The millions of unemployed could not depend on federal aid. The poverty was real and omnipresent and debilitating. "Many old businesses are going to the wall," Youngstown lawyer Benjamin Roth wrote in his diary on December 10, 1931, "and many of them lived thru 5 previous panics but never saw anything like this."

The paradox is that, while Americans in the Depression were worse off than Americans today, they were nonetheless more optimistic. Jodie T. Allen of the Pew Research Center recently looked at public opinion during the Depression years and found that "despite their far higher and longer-lasting record of unemployment, Depression-era Americans remained hopeful for the future." The Gallup organization began conducting regular surveys in 1935, so we have no polling data showing how people felt in December 1931. But if survey findings from later in the Depression are any indication, the country was filled with cockeyed optimists. Half of Depression-era Americans, Allen writes, expected the economy to improve in the next six months. Close to two-thirds told pollsters that their economic opportunities were at least as good or better than their fathers'.

The sunniness shows up in other sources as well. "Magazines and newspapers are full of articles telling people to buy stocks, real estate etc. at present bargain prices," Benjamin Roth wrote in his diary on July 30, 1931. "They say that times are sure to get better and that many fortunes have been built this way." On December 19, 1931, the *Times* gleefully reported: "A wave of buying enthusiasm swept over the security markets yesterday, producing the broadest recovery in more than two months."

Even Hoover was in on the act. He was ridiculed for his glass-is-half-full pronouncements, but that doesn't mean his mentality was unrepresentative. In March 1930, for instance, he assured the country that the crisis would end within two months. "So earnestly did Hoover believe in the importance of confidence," writes Richard Hofstadter in *The American Political Tradition*, "that he journeyed from Washington to Philadelphia in the gloomy fall of 1931 in part because he felt that his attendance at a World Series game would be a public demonstration of his own serenity."

Where did all these positive thinkers go? Today's America is a pessimistic country. Turn on the news and you can't help thinking that the world is going to pot. Our media continually remind us that we are stupid, lazy, fat, and materialistic. Somebody needs to hand President Obama a Zoloft, because he always seems disappointed and unhappy. Jodie Allen reports that in October 2010 only 35 percent of the public expected the economy to be better within a year. Large majorities believe the country is headed in the wrong direction. In the December 2010 Gallup poll, Congress's approval rating reached a record low. The specter of American decline is pervasive. America is a far richer, more stable, and more powerful country in 2010 than it was in 1931. But it is less confident. It is more uncertain.

The final difference between the Depression era and the recession era is political. The America of the 1930s was more open to government intervention in the economy than the America of 2010. Government functions we take for granted now were radical innovations then. Study the numbers from 1936 and 1937 and you find that large majorities supported free health care for the poor, subsidies for childbirth and postnatal care, public health programs to combat diseases like syphilis, and easy money for farmers. Large majorities wanted the government to regulate the food and drug industries, ban child labor, limit wartime business profits, and even take over the electric and munitions industries. A plurality wanted to see more power concentrated at the federal level.

Perhaps the public was willing to entrust more authority to the federal government because Washington was still so small. Perhaps the economic straits were so dire that the public would try anything that might work. Whatever the reason, it's worth noting that the big march on Washington in December 1931 wasn't a Tea Party. It was a march for workers' rights sponsored by the American Communist party.

According to the *New York Times* of December 7, 1931, "Herbert Benjamin, of New York, a leader in the march, brought more than 3,000 persons to their feet at a mass meeting at the Washington Auditorium when he asserted the Communist party was the only group left to organize and run the affairs of the United States." Not long after, in the spring of 1932, the Bonus Army, some 43,000 strong, marched on Washington demanding a government payout of veterans' benefits in advance of the promised date.

The Great Depression was a profound challenge to the legitimacy of democratic capitalism. The idea that the sys-

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tem had failed was widespread. Other ideologies were seductive. Walter Duranty reported on the successes of the Soviet "experiment" on the front pages of the *Times*. In December 1931 Mussolini's Fascists had ruled Italy for almost a decade. Today, *Times* columnist Tom Friedman may laud the virtues of Chinese authoritarianism. But Hu's Beijing is much less threatening than Stalin's Moscow, and Friedman is no true believer. The most energetic ideological enemy of democratic capitalism today, Islamic jihadism, has no broad constituency. The advanced economies all agree on a modified form of capitalism that contains a degree of support for the weakest members of society. In recent months, moreover, politics has shifted rightward throughout the free world. In Europe and the United States the emphasis is on restraining the state, not expanding it.

We are, in other words, generally better off than our counterparts in the 1930s. We are also more secure—the democracies, after all, had disarmed after the First World War. It's therefore tempting to let out a collective sigh and stop fretting. It's appealing to remember how much worse things were in the 1930s, and then get on with our lives.

But not so fast. For when you step back and take in the big picture, it becomes apparent that the world is facing dilemmas similar to those it faced in the 1930s. The international order may be once again on the brink of profound crisis. The challenges may not be as apparent or seem as dire. But they are there nevertheless. And they are dangerous.

The 1930s witnessed the unraveling of the institutional arrangements that had organized global business and international relations since November 11, 1918. One of the consequences of the Depression was that the global monetary system, the gold standard, fell apart. At the same time, the ideal of collective security, embodied in the League of Nations and the disarmament movement, was shattered in the Manchurian plain and in the deserts of Ethiopia.

The same currents are at work right now. You don't have to be an expert to notice that the "Bretton Woods II" system of fiat currencies anchored by the American dollar and accompanied by the euro is under severe strain. So is the post-World War II alliance structure of the United Nations and NATO. The former institution has proven irrelevant, while the latter is divided over Russia, Afghanistan, the admission of new members, and the organization's future. No country, meanwhile, has figured out how to deal with the problem of nuclear proliferation in Iran and North Korea.

The breakup of the euro or the end of the dollar's status as international reserve currency would wreak havoc on the global economy. A war on the Korean peninsula that involved China, Japan, and the United States, or the first successful test of an Iranian bomb, would have a similar effect on global security. If both things happened simultaneously, there would be a sea change in world politics. It's hard to see how any incumbent president could survive the turbulence. After all, as Hofstadter wrote of our thirty-first president, "What ruined Hoover's public career was not a sudden failure of personal capacity but the collapse of the world that had produced him and shaped his philosophy." It would be folly to think that such a collapse is impossible in the twenty-first century. Which is why it's worth looking more closely at the two aspects of the current crisis that bring to mind Auden's "low dishonest" decade.

MONEY. The post-World War I gold standard was never that strong. Nevertheless, it didn't begin to unravel until the spring of 1931, when several large European banks declared insolvency as a result of the crushing burden of war debt. On May 11, more than a year after the U.S. stock market crash, Austria's Creditanstalt announced that it was bankrupt. The result was a continental banking panic. Austrian and German banks simply couldn't find capital. Soon after Creditanstalt, the Danat bank of Germany went under. From there the contagion spread. It wasn't long before speculators set their sights on the pound sterling. "Faced with the heavy demands of speculators for gold and a widespread loss of confidence in the pound," Ben Bernanke noted in a 2004 speech, "the Bank of England quickly depleted its gold reserves."

On September 21, 1931, Britain and its empire went off the gold standard, thereby devaluing its currency. Other nations quickly followed. Japan announced it was abandoning gold on December 13. "This makes a total of 15 countries that have gone off the gold standard," Benjamin Roth wrote that week in his diary. "France and U.S. are the only 2 large countries remaining on the gold standard. . . . There is very little danger that U.S. will follow suit."

Roth was incorrect. FDR took the United States off the gold standard in 1933; France abandoned it in 1936. The arrangement of floating currencies lasted until the Bretton Woods conference in July 1944, when a new monetary regime was adopted involving fixed exchange rates pegged to gold. But Bretton Woods could not withstand the pressures of American deficit spending. Richard Nixon closed the gold window on August 15, 1971, nullifying Bretton Woods and inaugurating another era of floating exchange rates that persists to this day.

How long this era will continue is open to question. We seem to have entered another period of monetary instability, the outcome of which is far from certain. Once again, European sovereign debt is threatening financial institutions and the global economy. But that debt doesn't stem from defense

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spending. It's the result of overly generous welfare states and giant government bailouts. Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Belgium—the markets are pulling at the seams of all these nations. Try as they might, the EU and European Central Bank have been unable to stop the bleeding. And the austerity measures imposed by governments seeking to satisfy creditors have sparked domestic upheaval.

America's position isn't much better. Over the last 30 years the government has been able to take on a lot of debt because the dollar is the world's reserve currency. But the dollar's status is not a Mosaic commandment. The Federal Reserve's policy of quantitative easing—i.e., money creation—has undermined its institutional credibility, occasioned heated protests from foreign governments, and introduced uncertainty in international trade and capital flows. Competitive devaluation is the result. And all for what? The policy has already failed to achieve its stated goal of keeping yields low, and the economy seems to be slowly recovering anyway. All the money Ben Bernanke is creating has to go somewhere—which sets us up for another bubble.

It's comforting to think that circumstances will persist forever. But they don't. For decades, America has been able to have its economic cake and eat it too. What the '30s show, however, is that global monetary arrangements cannot continue indefinitely in the absence of consensus and confidence. And these are precisely the qualities that we lack today.

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BOMBS. It's become a cliché to view the diplomatic history of the 1930s through the lens of Munich. But Nazi Germany's annexation of Czechoslovakia was only one of many instances during the '30s when democracies failed to act in the face of belligerence. In September 1931, the same month that Britain left the gold standard, the Japanese annexed Manchuria in northern China. No one stopped them.

A newspaper reader in December 1931 couldn't have helped noticing the Japanese advance. "Big Japanese Force Reaches Manchuria As New Drive Opens," read the headline in the December 28 *New York Times*. "Japanese Capture Four Towns in Drive Toward Chinchow," the paper reported the next day. The articles dutifully recorded Secretary of State Henry Stimson's protests. The League of Nations passed condemnations. But the Japanese did not leave Manchuria. They did not give up their dreams of a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere." They marched on—until finally they were met with force.

Nor was Japan the only enemy gaining strength. Read through the periodical literature of 1931, and you may be surprised at how famous Adolf Hitler already was. The Nazi movement and its leader were internationally recognized. His ideology and dreams were understood. Hitler did not simply spring onto the scene in 1933. In December 1931, one of the last Weimar chancellors, Heinrich Brüning, tried to expel Hitler from Prussia. But the Austrian was undaunted. On December 7 he gave a front-page interview to the *New York Times*. "Herr Hitler declined to reveal to his interviewer the National Socialists' economic program," the correspondent wrote, "but intimated that there would be many changes in the laws of Germany if his party were swept into power."

Japanese imperialism, German Nazism, Italian Fascism, Soviet communism—all these actors were on the stage in December 1931, behaving badly and paying no price. The democracies, meanwhile, were busy arguing with one another over armament quotas. They persisted in the delusion that war was an anachronism. They were determined never to repeat Verdun and the Somme. They could not conceive that others might disagree.

Are things so very different today? Iran's megalomaniacal dictatorship marches toward nuclear weaponry. North Korea shells its neighbor with impunity. Jihadists execute terrorist attacks throughout the world. China expands its reach. We know who the troublemakers are and where the challenges to American primacy and global stability come from. But we have our own distractions. We have the fantasy of abolishing nuclear weapons, of "resetting" relations with Vladimir Putin's Russia, of reconciling the irreconcilable in the Middle East, of achieving rapprochement with "the Muslim world."

A few people in December 1931 recognized the growing danger. The patient at Lenox Hill Hospital was one. Another was the *New Yorker* correspondent Mary Heaton Vorse, who wrote from Germany, "No one knows what is going to hap-

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pen. No one knows—but everyone knows that cataclysm is at hand." Vorse was somehow able to divine the next 14 years of world history by sitting in a nightclub. "The next act will be starker," she concluded. "It will be steel instead of rococo marble."

The lesson of the 1930s is not only that aggression ought not to be appeased. It's that aggressors keep pushing until they encounter resistance. And by the time that happens, it may be too late to prevent the deluge.

What unites our two eras, in the end, is their unpredictability. This, and the fact that people in one time had no better idea of what might happen than people in the other.

Picture Churchill as he lay stricken on Fifth Avenue. "Perhaps it is the end," he recalled thinking. He did not have the luxury of knowing, as we do, what would happen next. He did not know how well he would recover—or if he would recover at all. He was ignorant of the challenges that awaited him. For people alive in the 1930s, each day brought a tangle of developments that were difficult to interpret and impossible to analyze from the detached perspective of historical study. There was no guide for the perplexed. There was no cheat sheet that told them what to do. There was no way of knowing when the crisis was "over" because there was no way of knowing what tomorrow would bring.

Our leaders don't have to worry about mass unemployment on the scale of the 1930s. But they do have to worry about structural deficits of perilous magnitude, debt burdens, sovereign default, and currency wars. Our leaders don't have to worry about Japanese expansion or the rise of Adolf Hitler. But they do have to worry about nuclear weaponry falling into the hands of apocalyptic theocrats, and a nuclear-armed Hermit Kingdom that may choose war over dissolution. The stakes during one era may have been greater than the other. Time will tell. But that doesn't mean the challenges are dissimilar. To the contrary: A difference in degree is not a difference in kind.

Of course, we have one thing that Americans in the '30s did not. We have their history. We have their words. We'd do well to heed them. "Nature is merciful and does not try her children, man or beast, beyond their compass," Churchill wrote from his hospital bed in December 1931. "It is only where the cruelty of man intervenes that hellish torments appear. For the rest—live dangerously; take things as they come; dread naught, all will be well."

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Catastrophic Success

The perils of a 'do everything' Democratic Congress

By Noemie Emery

Once upon a time, there was success and there was failure, and one could usually tell the difference between them—the first had a thousand fathers and the second was an orphan—but those days are over: The Democrats of 2010 have come up with a new variant, catastrophic success. That's what happens when you do something big, and it turns out quite badly, when you pass your agenda and get beaten for doing it, when you rack up a historic level of legislative achievements most of which most people hate. This is the fate of the Democrats' 2009-2010 Congress: In the old days, you failed when you didn't enact your agenda and were run against as a "do-nothing" Congress; it took Barack Obama, Harry Reid, and Nancy Pelosi to define failure as doing too much.

Seldom before has such a thing happened, but seldom before has an administration governed so against the grain of public opinion, and when this occurs, there are costs. The costs are the loss of the House by a landslide of epic proportions and the implosion of support for the president's party. The success is the passage of Obamacare, which liberals believed would change things forever. Congresses come and go, so they said, while a historic reform is forever: It would live on, they averred, while the results of the midterms would blow off quite quickly. But even before the Eastern District Court of Virginia blew a large hole in Obamacare in early December, finding its individual mandate unconstitutional, there were signs that this bargain was taking on water. There are four little words to be said to these people: Don't be too sure.

Don't be too sure, in the first place, that the effects of these midterms will dwindle that fast. The elections this year were not like those of the previous conservative blowout. For one thing, 1994 did not end in 0. But 2010 does, which means "census," which means redistricting, which is a job done by the states. In this election, the voters gave control of most of the states to Republicans, who will use the opportunity voters gave them. How big was the Republicans' gain in statehouses? In three words, wide, sweeping, and deep. They picked up a record 680 seats in state legislatures. The tide swept through the Midwest, through big states and swing states, erasing gains Democrats had made in two previous cycles, turning one-time Obama states red. Republicans gained more than 100 seats in New Hampshire (which had gone for Obama); went in Michigan from a Democratic lead of 22 seats to a Republican lead of 16; went in Minnesota from being down 40 seats to being up 10; went in Iowa from being down 12 seats to being up 20; and went in Texas to a lead in the statehouse so commanding that a local reporter called it "an annihilation bordering on political genocide." At the same time, Republicans went from having 22 to 29 governors, including in all the key swing states.

The effects of this inland tsunami will help shape the future in several ways, of which redistricting is only the first. Republicans will redraw four times as many district lines as Democrats. This will influence the next five congressional elections, until the 2020 census comes along. Some observers think this alone could be good for between 15 and 25 seats in upcoming elections. That may be optimistic, but control of redistricting certainly can't hurt. Added to this, Obama now faces hostile state governments in *all* the swing states he won two years ago, including Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin, as well as Ohio, Virginia, and Florida. He has to win most of these, or else he's a goner. Statehouses also give rise to the stars of the future and are the seedbeds from which governors, senators, and now and then presidents spring. The massacre in the states means the Democrats will have a weak bench going forward. Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, as well as Obama, began on the state level. Were future Democratic stars drowned in the flood?

Congressmen talk, but governors govern and can present competing conservative models of government to put alongside Obama's ideas. New Jersey's Chris Christie and Virginia's Bob McDonnell, elected in 2009, have had great success already cutting taxes and spending, and the new class seems eager to follow their lead. These new governors are not only younger (and much more conservative), but also far more diverse. Republicans now have four female governors, two Hispanics, and two Indian-Americans—a more heterodox crew than the Democrats currently have. Some may find their way onto national tickets and, in doing so, change the idea of the party as the domain of

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the old, white, and male. They will vie for the lead in the fight against health care, and fittingly so, and it was this that elected them. In the coming two years, this will be their main battle. Democrats said that losing the House was a price well worth paying, but the loss of the states may be in the long run a great deal more costly. One of these governors may turn into the president who signs health care's repeal into law.

At the same time, don't be too sure that Obamacare is forever, at least not in the form that it passed. A Republican president could sign a repeal that was passed by a simple majority. The Supreme Court could declare it unconstitutional, as did the court in Virginia, which was only 1 of 24 state-propelled lawsuits, now making their way up the chain. (The case could reach the Court just in time for the 2012 election: with what impact no one can guess.) In the meantime, the GOP has made plans for a campaign of attrition, designed to soften it up for that coming election, and designed less to upend it in one single motion than to inflict many cuts from a thousand directions, through which its life blood may trickle away. The House can block funds needed for implementation: money to hire the IRS agents needed to enforce the individual mandate; funds to run the board that approves cuts in Medicare; funds to help states set up insurance exchanges the states may not want to see formed.

GARY LOCKE

The House will make life hard for the Democrats in the Senate, 23 of whom are up for reelection in 2012, and 13 of whom come from states in which Obamacare is extremely unpopular and which took a sharp turn to the right in the recent midterm elections. It will force them to vote over and over on health care, choosing between their constituents and their party and president, knowing their "aye" votes will find their way into commercials run by their GOP challengers, and their "nay" votes will enrage their own party's base. When they voted "aye" for the first time (in December 2009) it was bad enough, but they had no way of knowing that the endgame would become quite so ugly, that the act itself would become quite so unpopular, or that Obama would become quite so unable to save them from voters' hostility; now they know all of these things.

A parallel line of attack will be opened up by state governments, where the new crop of governors (and state representatives) will come in quite handy indeed. Complaining that compliance with the new law would bankrupt her state, Governor-elect Nikki Haley of South Carolina urged Obama to repeal his signature act outright, and then asked for opt-outs for some of its major provisions. In Virginia, the State Senate declared it illegal to mandate that the state's residents buy health insurance, setting up a confrontation with the federal government. In Minnesota, Governor Tim Pawlenty directed state agencies to "reject participation in Obamacare unless required by law or consistent with existing state policy." Some states are asking for waivers to opt out of parts of the health care reform act, others are considering dropping the Medicaid program in response to the expansion the new act demands. At the same time, they will pour on the political pressure in Washington: "We are going to form an oversight entity that will identify Washington programs that aren't working, go to Capitol Hill and testify on how they can be handled better and propose . . . practices for how states can govern themselves without undue interference from the feds," Republican Governors' Association head Haley Barbour told the *Wall Street Journal*. What "Washington programs" might he have in mind?

Along with the lawsuits, and fights in the House and statehouses, there seems to exist a distinct possibility that the act may collapse of its weight. Assembled in haste—one might say desperation—and larded with deals to secure votes and backing, it is a 2,000-plus page assemblage of time bombs with varying fuse lengths that are starting to blow up in succession, causing large numbers of people inconvenience, or money, or both. Almost every provision seems to have some part that conflicts with another or contrives in some way to screw up the market in ways hitherto unforeseen. Increased costs are causing employers to drop people from coverage, to charge more for coverage, or to drop drug coverage for employees' children. Thus far, 222 waivers have been granted to members of interest groups who favor the Democrats, enabling them to opt out of parts of the plan that might become onerous. Doctors are planning to shutter their practices. The promises made by Obama—about being able to keep your own plan or doctor—are turning out to be hollow. "Firms Feel Pain from Health Law" ran a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* describing the problems faced by large and middle-sized businesses in

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trying to understand, much less to comply with, the act.

"There's [an] administrative burden just to try and understand the 2,400 pages," said one executive, describing the pain of spending so much time and money on things that aren't helping their companies grow. Because of this, among other reasons, the bill continues to grow more unpopular, as six in ten people now favor repeal. "It's looking more and more as if [the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act] as passed is simply not politically (or practically) stable," Megan McArdle wrote on the website of the *Atlantic*. "I think Democrats were counting on having more years to tweak it. . . . That was a very dangerous gamble . . . considering how badly it did in the polls." They counted on time to tweak it upward and left (assuming that history moves in just this direction), and now have to realize it will be tweaked downward and right, if it survives in the first place. And let us recall that all of their upbeat predictions —that Obama's numbers would go up by 10 points once he signed it (Bill Clinton); that people would reward Democrats for having "proved they could govern"; that people would ignore or get over the process that was used to pass Obamacare; that it would be accepted and grow popular, like Social Security—have proved to be wrong.

Don't be too sure, finally, that the damage Obamacare has done to the progressive agenda is something that can be quickly undone. Remember the hype at Obama's election? It was historic! It was transcendent! It was transformational, uppercase CHANGE! Conservatism was dead, said Sam Tanenhaus and a cadre of others. *Newsweek* affirmed that we were "all socialists now." The mainstream narrative held that the financial crisis had opened a door for Obama and Reid and Pelosi, and that their successes would feed a demand for more government. But the master plan failed to work out. The Democrats' "stimulus" gave birth to resistance; the mortgage bailouts conjured a Tea Party; and then it was health care reform —the act itself, along with the long fight to pass it—that brought it all tumbling down. Obama's job approval ratings were in the high 50s in April 2009, when he began selling health care; in the high 40s in December, when the Senate passed health care, and in the low 40s when Congress put the finishing touches to Obamacare in March 2010.

Along the way, independents discovered their inner Republican and swung against the man they had elected; conservatism had an astounding revival; and support for activist government, which had briefly ticked up with Obama's election to a 51-43 ratio, fell back two years later to 38-56. His legislative successes all added up to less faith in government: By the summer of 2010, a large group of liberals had succumbed to depression, as they sensed their successful battles had produced a lost war. "The storyline is much larger than merely that the stimulus has failed," wrote Michael Tomasky in the *Guardian*. "It is that government is a failure. . . . The great bottom-line hope back in November 2008 was that Obama was going to restore trust in government and prove it could solve problems. That hasn't happened." The chance of a lifetime has been squandered by liberals. Another won't come again soon.

Giddy with failure after the midterm elections, some on the left still insist it was all worth it, regardless of their losses. They "convinced themselves that their agenda . . . is the moral equivalent of the Voting Rights Act," as William Galston has put it, a cause whose grandeur justifies unpopularity and electoral defeat. But the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts were passed with healthy majorities and many votes from Republicans; they were unpopular in the deep South, but nowhere beyond it. While passing them, Lyndon B. Johnson won a spectacular blowout in the 1964 election, losing only the old South, plus his opponent's home state. Obamacare, however, has always been unpopular, is unpopular, everywhere and has only seen its unpopularity increase. Liberals claim an entitlement is never rejected, but the broad middle class doesn't think that this is one: It expects to pay more for less choice and less service, which fuels its strong opposition and pique.

There is no precedent for a bill of this size and scope being passed in defiance of the will of the public by a duly-elected majority which has nonetheless ceased to reflect or even acknowledge the views of the voters. For this reason, much of the public thinks it illegitimate, and sees nothing wrong in amassing a collection of weapons in the effort to see it undone.

If a Republican is elected in 2012, then health care is history. If health care is *the* issue, Obama will lose. If all things are equal, and it is *an* issue, a loss is still likely. If the economy rebounds strongly, Obama will probably win. But if it doesn't, and he loses because of this reason, then health care will have helped do him in. Businesses are sitting on loads of cash these days, reluctant to invest and add jobs until they know what will happen with regulations and taxes under this new health care dispensation, which may take effect, be radically altered in the states or by Congress, or be blown away by the courts. They may not know until during or after the 2012 cycle, when the Supreme Court may weigh in, the wars in the states and the House may be settled, and they may have some idea who will be running the government in 2013. If the recovery stalls through 2012, it will be very bad news for the president.

The Democrats' problem is that their losses are locked in and a given, while the state of their "win" remains highly precarious. If Obama wins, his health care regime may still emerge diminished and battered. If he loses, for whatever reason, then Obamacare is gone. ♦

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Holocaust Hegemony

. . . and its moral pitfalls

By Sam Schulman

Last month, the Canadian journalist Richard Klagsbrun drew attention to a newly submitted Master's thesis at the University of Toronto's ed school: "The Victimhood of the Powerful: White Jews, Zionism and the Racism of Hegemonic Holocaust Education." Proud author Jennifer Peto told a reporter for the *Canadian Jewish News* that Canada's Jews push the Holocaust narrative because only "a victimized Jewish identity can produce certain effects that are beneficial to the organized Jewish community and the Israeli nation-state."

Of course there is nothing novel about Peto's view that Jews exploit the Holocaust, as can be seen in a casual rifle through past issues of the *London Review of Books* or the writings of left-wing scholars like Norman Finkelstein. The beauty of Peto's formulation is that it can be used without alteration both by Holocaust-affirmers (like Peto) and Holocaust-deniers: *The Jewish Lobby has been deploying Holocaust history (whether faked or real matters not) only to obscure the Gestapo-style tactics used to oppress Palestinians.* But the real genius of Peto's attack on Canadian Holocaust-educators is that it can produce the same effects as Holocaust-denial. The many admirers of the immediate object of her study—a long-established Holocaust-education tour of concentration camp sites in Europe—were hurt, shocked, and enraged.

Peto and her comrades in the anti-Zionist Israel-Apartheid movement don't really care whether Holocaust education is disinterested or not. Their aims are bolder: the bloody dissolution of the state of Israel, among all the countries of the world. Distracted by Peto's cruelty, the outraged defenders of the March of Remembrance and Hope pleaded (accurately) that their tour teaches "universal lessons of tolerance and empathy." But they neglected to refute the underlying claim of the anti-Zionist movement: that Israel as a state deserves to be annihilated and its citizens dispersed; that Jewish citizens of Western democracies are bad Jews and disloyal citizens (of America, or Canada, or Sweden) if they believe Israel ought to exist; and that they are good Jews and good citizens only as long as they regard Israel as malign and unconnected to themselves (I cannot claim credit for the elegant terms "good Jew" and "bad Jew"—I borrow them from Professor John Mearsheimer).

The sad truth is that a real "hegemon" needs followers—and, measured by its effects, Holocaust education has none. Jennifer Peto is dead wrong: Far from being the creation of sinister Jews who wanted to be regarded as victims rather than "white," Holocaust education was to be a gift from the Jewish community to the world at large. European Jewry was destroyed, but its legacy would be a redemptive technique that was intended to prevent future genocides of others. Kofi Annan described the ideal of Holocaust education perfectly last year in an op-ed: "a vital mechanism for teaching students to value democracy and human rights, and encouraging them to oppose racism and promote tolerance in their own societies." The former U.N. secretary-general confesses that he thought Holocaust education should have helped "to prevent future acts of genocide," but it has not: The op-ed murmurs the words Cambodia, the Congo, Bosnia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Sudan. Annan proposes to look into "better teacher training."

The idea of Holocaust education really took off in 1993 with the opening of the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington. The notion is simple, and there is something ineffably '90s about the enterprise. Vice President Al Gore—an iconic '90s figure—explained how it was to work in a speech on the first anniversary of the museum's opening: "In order to prevent such an atrocity from ever happening again, those who care must tell the story." And that would be it. Give me a child, the Holocaust education movement said to the world, and after passing through my exhibits and taking one of my courses, I will give you back a woman like Samantha Power or a man like Warren Christopher or even Kofi Annan—a warrior against future genocides, or at least a person immunized forever against racism and the desire to murder thousands of civilians with a stroke of the pen.

The aim was lofty, and like so many ideas that germinated after the end of the Cold War, it seemed attractive because it didn't demand much effort or expense. In Britain, Tony Blair's government enthusiastically instituted a Holocaust Memorial Day in 2001. Remembering the Holocaust as a nation would, he said, "reaffirm the triumph of good" over evil. Home Secretary Jack Straw was confident that remembering the Holocaust suffered by the Jews would ben-

Sam Schulman wrote about the prosecution of Geert Wilders in our November 22 issue.

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efit all: "The universal lessons of the Holocaust make this commemoration day relevant to everyone in our society. We all have a shared responsibility to fight against discrimination and to help foster a truly multicultural Britain." Starting in the '90s, many European nations (France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and a dozen others) unhampered by common-law traditions of free speech began to do their bit on the punitive side, initiating laws that forbade Holocaust-denial.

Holocaust remembrance and education is one of those ideas which really *has* been tried. If students learn any history at all, it is the history of the Holocaust. Genocide Studies has become an academic specialty and a fundraising bonanza, with professional organizations and prizes. Great books have been written and beautiful museums have been built—all in the conviction that they will prevent the production of future mass murderers and their willing executioners. Of course, people are only human and thus have produced versions of Holocaust study that are vulgar, distorted, oversimplified, inhumane, and unintentionally comic and undignified. But even shallow and trashy expressions of "Holocaust awareness" are not lacking in genuine piety and concern, and share the belief that they are engaged in a virtuous struggle against hate.

The Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust opens, Oct. 14, 2010.

AP PHOTO / DAMIAN DOVARGANES

The Jews and the state of Israel were not much of a concern for the movement's founders. It did not occur to anyone that anti-Semitism would reemerge, except among a few Holocaust-deniers. And as for Israel, its future was to be secured by the Oslo peace process, which was put on track by the same president who opened the U.S. Holocaust Museum in the same year of 1993, and shared some of the easy confidence of that decade.

The theory of Holocaust education, I think all except Jennifer Peto will agree, has been one of the great failures of our time. But it's important to know how it has failed—and even more, to understand that our sentimental attachment to Holocaust memorialization can fail us with greater consequence in the future, as can our sentimental horror at those villains who deny the reality of the Holocaust. What happened as we learned about the Holocaust? Generally, nothing at all. Those politicians who speechified at the Holocaust Museum in the '90s looked the other way, just as their predecessors in the 1930s did, as mass murders continued to take place. On the anti-Semitism front, the Maginot line of Holocaust education, human nature has not only refused to improve, but seems to have gotten worse. In one European country after another, observers—non-Jewish observers—remark levels of anti-Semitism unprecedented since 1945, despite Europe's generous application of the Holocaust-memorial carrots and Holocaust-denial sticks. Jewish populations in Sweden are leaving entire cities; the retired chief of Holland's major conservative party last month advised Jews who are "identifiably Jewish" to leave the country, because the Dutch state cannot protect them from anti-Semitic violence. It's not Holocaust-deniers who commit attacks on individual Jews in Dutch cities; far from it. The Amsterdammers who jostle and taunt Rabbi Raphael Evers on streetcars are well informed, shouting "*Joden aan het gas*"—Jews to the gas chambers.

Holocaust education may have done more than fail. It might also have produced an unintended, but measurable effect that is even worse. One thinks of the little girl who objected to being taught the Ten Commandments in Sunday School: "They don't tell me what I *should* do and they just give me *ideas*." The current generation of university students—Holocaust-educated from the nursery on—have been given ideas. And on campuses around the world, not just in Protestant Europe, it is fair to say that the more the current student generation have been taught about the evil of the Holocaust, the more Israel seems to them to resemble Nazi Germany rather than itself. Even if we resist the false suggestion that Israel is conducting a genocide of Palestinians, our Holocaust-instruction has left us all with an equally false notion: that Israel was created by Europeans in the Middle East in order to make amends to European Jews for a European Holocaust.

The falseness of this idea is not merely a matter of historical interest; it is false in a brilliantly focused way. Because in fact, quite apart from the unbroken continuity of Jewish life in Palestine since antiquity, and the recurring affirmation of the connection of the Diaspora to the land of Israel, the creation of Israel was an event that coincided with the creation of most of the modern states of the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The Jewish state in Palestine was created by those who fought and won the First World War, not the Second; and its raw material was the same as the raw material of the majority of the members of the EU and the Arab League: the broken territories of the great colonial powers, Germany,

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Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. The beneficiaries of this impulse were to create new states for Arabs and Arabic speakers throughout the Ottoman empire, for South Slavs, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Lithuanians, Jews, Armenians, Kurds, Estonians, Latvians, Ukrainians. Israel's origin, then, is postcolonial, not imperialist. And those concerned with Israel's survival should properly be concerned with the survival as free democracies of other postcolonial states on the periphery of tyranny elsewhere, such as Lebanon, Georgia, Ukraine, and even Lithuania and Poland.

It is fun to make sport of the naïveté of Gore, Blair, and Annan. But we need to be just as hard on ourselves now when we think about our own proud but sentimental attachment to the idea of the Holocaust and its lessons for humanity. We need to be smarter than they were about the political and moral costs to our own interests as Americans and sustainers of liberal democracy. We're not.

Determined and skillful enemies of human freedom (and even Jewish existence) in Israel, in Eastern Europe, and elsewhere are making clever use of our fondness for clichés about the Holocaust and memory. Nor are these enemies of human freedom necessarily Holocaust-deniers or historical fabricators. They are simply playing on the historical anxieties of the Jews and other peoples who have emerged from a long history of religious or colonial domination.

Consider the postcolonial relations between Poland and its former Russian masters. Last month, the Russian Duma finally acknowledged Stalin's responsibility for the 1940 Katyn massacre, in which 22,000 Polish officers, priests, professors, and other notables were murdered by the secret police, the NKVD. That Katyn was a Communist party crime has never been in doubt. So why should the Poles care about what the Duma says now? The Duma passed the resolution out of a desire to get the better of Poland. A leading deputy told the *Moscow Times*: "We have said this many times before, and now [the Poles] wanted to hear it again from us." "In return," he added, "Polish public opinion about Russia should improve." And among modern Polish notables, so it did. Poland's leaders are now more willing to pay high prices to Russia's Gazprom for natural gas they could extract from their own shale reserves. Whether Polish conciliation of Russia's ambitions is a good thing or not is for the Poles to judge—but clearly Russia can manipulate Polish opinion by a trivial gesture about a great and grave crime. Putin—an alumnus of the KGB with institutional descent from the NKVD mass murderers—could see how eager the Poles were for this acknowledgment, and how little it would cost him to satisfy them. A great deal for Gazprom is worth a meaningless concession to "history."

Here is the plot: A tyrant with blood on his hands, interested in extending his power, makes an "okay" statement to an innocent about historical mass murder; innocent collapses in gratitude. Readers of Atlantic.com this summer saw such a *mise-en-scène* live-blogged from Havana. Our hero, the ingenuous Jeffrey Goldberg; the villain, unsportingly overmatching him, was Fidel Castro. Castro confessed, one gentleman to another, that the crude anti-Semitism of Venezuela's Hugo Chávez and the flamboyant Holocaust-denial of Iran's Ahmadinejad were rather embarrassing to a man of the world like himself. This was enough to win the heart of Goldberg, who quickly dialed *Haaretz* to tell them how impressed he was that Castro felt "genuinely offended" by Holocaust-denial (a generation after Castro had removed the burden of their businesses and other property from Cuba's own Jewish community).

Giddy with his discovery that Castro was *salonfähig*, Goldberg was willing to overlook a number of character faults far more consequential than Holocaust-denial to current Cuban dissidents, political prisoners, nonwhites, gays, and the rest of the long-suffering Cuban people. Castro's fellow dictators, however, could take the hint. The *Boston Globe* reported the results: "Chávez has tolerated and even promoted virulent anti-Semitism in Venezuela. But a day after Castro's condemnation of Ahmadinejad's anti-Semitism, Chávez said he would meet with Jewish community leaders and declared: 'We respect and love the Jewish people.'" A couple of years ago, Chávez called Jews "Christ-killers"; a couple of months ago Chávez issued the threat that if he were to lose the next election, he would call out the army to keep himself in power. Can he really think that by making the proper noises to American journalists, he can count on many happy years of dictatorship? Alas, Chávez is not as stupid as he looks. He has found that affirming the historic truth of the Holocaust to the right naïf may be the price of sustaining a present-day dictator in power. And Goldberg is no more naïve than any number of supporters of liberal democracy.

How far can Holocaust attachment take us into the moral swamp? If Holocaust-consciousness can ever be described as a fetish, then we must nominate Rabbi Abraham Cooper as its Sacher-Masoch. In January 2010 the good rabbi issued this thundering press release from his office at the Simon Wiesenthal Center: "Dropping International Holocaust Memorial Day Would Be World's Final Insult to Survivors; Would Spur New Wave of Anti-Semitism." The idea that the Holocaust-denial barnacle controls the anti-Semitic aircraft carrier is absurd—but it's merely an extreme version of our attachment to the truth-value of the Holocaust. The result is that well-meaning liberals in the West have unintentionally given more power, not less, to Holocaust-deniers, sincere or cynical.

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Of course Holocaust-denial is repellent. But how often is it sincere? Authentic Holocaust denial no doubt exists—and it is an excellent marker for anti-Semitism, madness, and really impressive bores. But consider a dangerous *genocidaire-manqué* like Ahmadinejad. His Holocaust-denial is too smart to be authentic. He understand that staging fetes for Western Holocaust deniers drives his enemies wild—and when his enemies are worrying about David Irving they are not thinking about how best to support Iranian student dissidents or to delay the deployment of his nuclear missiles.

The truth about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism is this: Most anti-Semites are perfectly well-informed about the actuality of the Holocaust; so are most people who believe that the time has come for the state of Israel to be eliminated. Most anti-Semites authentically regret the destruction of European Jewry; they are also likely to openly regret that those European Jews who escaped the Nazis by fleeing to Palestine were not murdered as well. Tell them that their loathing of Zionism is a symptom of true Jew-hatred, and they will be shocked and hurt but they will happily explain to you the likeness between the IDF and the *Einsatzgruppen*. Holocaust education, however well its teachers are trained, will never pry such people loose from their defects of character and judgment—or from their underlying feelings about Jews as individuals and fellow-citizens.

A last example of the unintentional destructiveness of Holocaust education hegemony. This fall, the Yale historian Timothy Snyder published a well-regarded and beautifully written book called *Bloodlands*, telling the story of the Hitler-Stalin collaboration in the destruction of Poland and a good many of its citizens, Jewish, Polish, Ukrainian, and other minorities. Most reviewers praised it—for revealing a new dimension of the Good War: that Stalin and Hitler worked together on many ghastly projects and their collaboration in barbarism was synergistic (I think informed readers will learn far more from a disregarded book published this year, Alexander V. Prusin's *The Lands Between*). Reviewers like Anne Applebaum foresaw the danger Snyder was tempting, and spent a lot of time explaining that Snyder was not equating the crimes of Stalin with the crimes of Hitler. But his reviewers didn't save him, and the poor fellow had to defend himself in Britain's *Guardian* on the charge of moral equivalence.

In the eyes of the *Guardian* leftists, Snyder is an unwitting abetter of the "double genocide"—the notion that Hitler's crimes were one genocide, and the crimes of Stalin, though different in many respects, were another. Communists and fellow travelers are passionate adherents of the notion that the Jewish Holocaust is nonpareil. So is Efraim Zuroff, an admirable Nazi-hunter in the Israeli branch of the Wiesenthal Center, who says that the notion that the "Communist crimes were just as terrible as those of the Nazis" would "unjustly rob the Shoah of its universally accepted uniqueness and historical significance." And so is Dovid Katz of the Litvak Studies Institute in Vilnius, who in the *Tablet* accuses those who call for a memorial of the European victims of communism, led by Vaclav Havel, of wanting to whitewash Nazi crimes and "delete the Holocaust." Katz, Zuroff, and other well-meaning Jews who are familiar with the sometimes unpleasant politics of present-day Lithuania, are enthusiastic warriors, along with the Russians, the Communists, and various Trotskyist factions, in the struggle against the two-genocide theory. The leader of the British Communist party, for one, is outraged that Havel's group asserts that "Lenin's definition of revolution meant that it must take power through armed violence, deny democratic principles, and commit crimes against fellow citizens." Think of it!

Consider again the former colonial power of Eastern Europe, Russia. Russia is now threatening a number of the small countries the USSR ruled by right of inheritance from the czar. It has waged hot war against Georgia, wars of assassination and intimidation against Ukraine, and threatens the internal politics of Poland, the Czech Republic, and the three Baltic states. All of them have dreadful historic memories of conquest and mass murder by successive waves of Russian and German imperial enterprises, first Czarist, then Wilhelmine, then Bolshevik, then Nazi. But the Russians are still around, and the left is renascent, in its latest postcolonial and postnationalist garb. Those who hold on to the uniqueness of the Holocaust and the Nazi "gold standard" of evil are unwittingly allying themselves with the hard-left activists who are leading the ideological war against Israel's existence and against the ability of democratic states to maintain their identity and protect their citizens. Nazis no longer threaten western democracy or Jewish existence—the danger lies elsewhere.

The left (which encompasses young Jennifer Peto and aging Communists) is entitled to its obsession with the Holocaust. As proud and programmatic minimizers of Communist mass murder, they should feign, if not feel, indignation at any attempt to compare the two savageries. This is not because they care about the Holocaust but because they want to put Socialism on the offensive again—in alliance with anti-Zionism when possible, with anti-Semitism if necessary, and, fervently, with any kind of anti-Americanism whatsoever, even to the extent of apologizing for terrorism. On the other hand, here are the rest of us, whose Holocaust education seems to have made so many uniquely gullible about the real enemies faced by Jews and liberal democracies today. ♦

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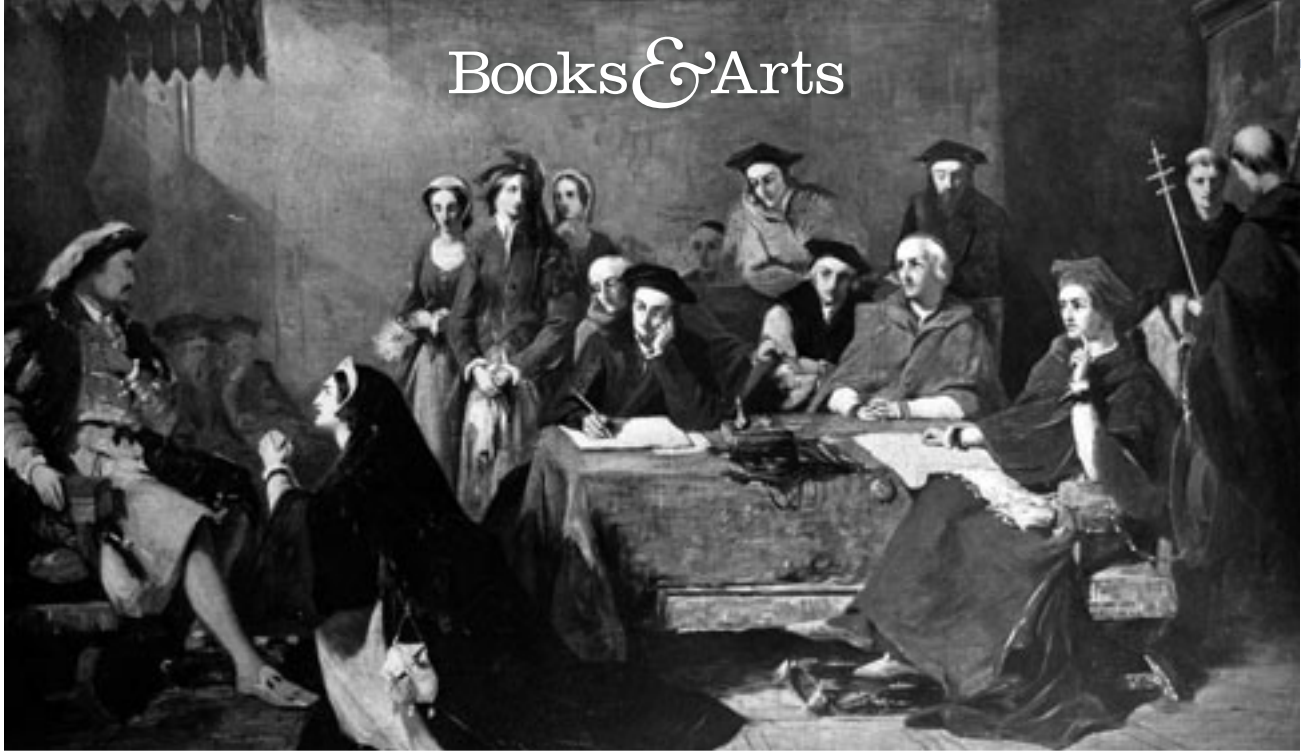

'The Trial of Catherine of Aragon' (1900) by Henry O'Niel

The Spanish Heroine

Henry's first, and most admirable, wife

BY J.J. SCARISBRICK

The quick-fire chapters (50 in 369 pages), their spicy titles (such as "Bedroom Politics," "Virginity," "Disease," "Carnal Copulation," "That Whore"), the wallowing in the details of royal pageants and jousts and gold-laden banquets, not to mention the gory minutiae of the plague, sweating sickness, and royal wedding nights, all relentlessly rehearsed, might suggest that this new biography of one of the most tragic women in English history had been specially souped up for a latter-day Hollywood movie or TV series. But to think thus would be unfair: This is a serious, scholarly book written with accomplished verve.

Catherine of Aragon
The Spanish Queen of Henry VIII
by Giles Tremlett
Walker, 448 pp., $28

Catherine of Aragon, the first wife of much-married Henry VIII of England, was the daughter of the formidable Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, whose own marriage had effectively created modern Spain. Like many royal offspring before and since, she was soon sacrificed on the altar of international diplomacy and sent to England in 1501 to marry Arthur, first son of Henry VII. Arthur died shortly after a royal wedding full of pomp and a carefully staged coupling: Arthur (it was later claimed) having boasted of success; Catherine later insisting that the marriage had not been consummated.

Stranded in England—and to save repayment of her dowry—the young widow was offered first to her widower father-in-law and then to his second son Henry, whom she eventually married in 1509. That was bad enough. Worse, despite repeated pregnancies, she produced only one daughter (Mary) and no son and heir; and her bullfrog husband was soon philandering. Eventually, the latter met the go-getting Anne Boleyn, who seemingly bewitched the eighth Henry as completely as another streetwise sophisticate bewitched the eighth Edward 400 years later. But Henry was not one to abdicate. Instead, he demanded that Rome declare his marriage to Catherine null and void on the ground that her marriage to Arthur had created an impediment of first-degree affinity between her and him, and that the papal dispensation which claimed to allow him to marry her had been *ultra vires*.

All this is well enough known and has been told many times, not least in the acclaimed life of Catherine by the American scholar Garrett Mattingly, published nearly 70 years ago. So one immediately asks whether Giles Tremlett has anything new and important to say. The answer should probably run as follows: He certainly puts much more flesh on Catherine's earlier years, including her first ones in England, thanks not least to access to material in Spain which Mattingly, though himself deeply immersed in

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TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

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Spanish archives, did not know. Some of this, he rather frustratingly tells us, "is in the possession of the author" and sometimes it is not clear whether he is quoting transcripts in the English National Archives of documents in Spain or summaries in the published (so-called) Spanish Calendars; but the picture he presents is very vivid.

As for the rest, the verdict must be that the author has been prodigiously industrious and has gutted every possible source. He has a wonderful eye for detail and writes rigorous, punchy prose. But the story is essentially unchanged. There is one important difference between Tremlett and his predecessor, however. Mattingly was young and rather sentimental. His Catherine was a courageous heroine who bore her sufferings and remained loyal to her husband (as, of course, to her beloved daughter) with rare dignity. Tremlett is a hard-bitten professional journalist/scholar. His Catherine is a fiery perfectionist and usually labeled "stubborn."

Inevitably there are things to argue about. For instance, whether her first marriage was consummated, Tremlett believes, "remains the essential mystery of Catherine's life." Even if one knew what an "essential mystery" was, one might hesitate to concur, not least for the following reason. If, as she said, Catherine came to Henry a virgin, there was indeed no impediment of affinity between them, but there was the impediment of what was rather curiously called "public honesty," i.e., a kind of public "decency" between her and Henry by virtue of her albeit unconsummated marriage to his brother. This was a lesser impediment, but still required papal dispensation. Tremlett rightly seizes on the crucial fact that, by reason of his adultery with Anne Boleyn's sister, Mary, exactly the same first-degree affinity existed between him and Anne as he alleged existed between him and Catherine; so if divine law forbade his marriage to Catherine, it forbade union with Anne as surely. But he misses the (minor) point about public honesty.

Perhaps the most dramatic part of Catherine's life (apart from the time in 1513 when, like her mother, she was effectively in charge of an army which won a major battle, in her case against the Scots at Flodden) occurred in 1529 when she faced the court appointed by Pope Clement VII to pass judgment on the validity of her marriage to Henry. Two cardinals—one, Thomas Wolsey, also lord chancellor—presided. Perhaps one can go further than Tremlett does and say that, thanks not least to the astonishingly able defense provided by her chief supporter, John Fisher, the king's case was demolished, whereupon Catherine audaciously (and successfully) appealed to Rome to revoke the whole matter to itself.

Reginald Pole

ARCHIVE PHOTOS / GETTY IMAGES

That was one of the decisive moments in English history. Tremlett believes that Cardinal Wolsey was then summarily stripped of the lord chancellorship and put on a trumped-up charge of lesser treason in punishment for his failure to secure the "divorce." But typically, he spots the intriguing fact that no sooner had Wolsey been sacked than he received a ring from Henry which was a secret token of the king's regard for him. So what was happening? Wolsey did not "fall." The whole affair was playacting. It and almost everything that Henry said and did in the next two years or so was intended to frighten Clement into handing back the case to England, where Henry could be more confident of getting the judgment he wanted.

The more one follows Tremlett and thinks about what happened in the next few years, the more perilous they can be seen to have been. If Henry was truly concerned (as he publicly professed to be) about securing the royal succession, the surest thing would have been to get Mary married to Reginald Pole, whose claim to the throne was unimpeachable, thanks to his descent from a younger brother of Edward IV. But instead, Henry saw Pole as a threat. So Pole fled to Italy knowing that, if he returned home, he would suffer the fate that eventually overtook his mother: death on the scaffold. He also knew that Henry was soon seeking to have him assassinated in some dark Italian back street. Conversely, if Henry's marriage to Catherine was invalid, Mary was a bastard, and Pole's claim even more evident.

Recently, new evidence has surfaced suggesting that Edward IV was illegitimate. It is likely that this was widely suspected at the time. If so, Edward's daughter who married Henry Tudor (Henry VII), and apparently gave the very dubious Tudors some much-needed legitimacy, did no such thing. That was equally true if one accepted that that daughter and her sister had been bastardized by their father's successor, Richard III. So in casting off Catherine and disinheriting Mary, Henry was bringing his country to the edge of an abyss. The situation became even more fraught when Anne Boleyn failed to produce the son that had been confidently predicted and instead gave birth to Elizabeth, perhaps the most unwanted child ever born to a king.

In the meantime, how dangerous Catherine had become. If Henry had been excommunicated—as many expected and hoped he would be—there could easily have been a rising against him, sanctioned by her. John Fisher was even calling upon the Holy Roman Emperor to send a task force to help to destroy him and put Mary on the throne.

In a moment of acute exasperation as she waited for Rome to give its final verdict on the legitimacy of her marriage, Catherine wrote to a dithering Clement VII that she did not know who was the more wicked, him or her husband. Surely that was a most remarkable thing for any woman to say to a pope. Stubborn? No, that is not the *mot juste.* Whatever that word is may elude one, but there is surely one clear fact: She (like Fisher) deserves to be honored by true feminists. ♦

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B&A

Burmese Days

A little sunlight on a dark place.

BY ELLEN BORK

Last month Aung San Suu Kyi stood atop a fence in front of her home, to which she has been confined for much of the past 21 years, and reintroduced herself to thousands of Burmese gathered on the street. "We haven't seen each other for so long," she told the crowd, "I have so much to tell you."

Seeing Suu Kyi, at ease with her people and unflinching toward the regime, makes one doubt whether the regime can afford to let her remain free. Unlike the freeing of Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Suu Kyi's release does not signal a decision by the Burmese junta to loosen its grip. Quite the opposite. Pursuing its "Road Map to Discipline-Flourishing Democracy"—which Western public relations firm came up with that?—the regime staged "elections" designed to cement its control and supplant the results of the 1990 election which, to the generals' chagrin, Suu Kyi's party won by a large margin. (She was under house arrest at the time.) It has been reported that, this time around, the generals have directed that their margin of "victory" exceed the National League for Democracy's tally of 1990.

Electoral fraud is one of the more rational things the generals do, and in *Everything Is Broken*, Emma Larkin, a pseudonym for a Burmese-speaking American, reports clandestinely on a country where surrealism is part of everyday life. A Rangoon analyst makes predictions according to the date of junta leader Than Shwe's birth; Than Shwe's wife is spotted circumambulating the bejeweled Shwedagon Pagoda leading a dog and a pig. Larkin visits remote, undeveloped Naypyidaw, to which the regime relocated abruptly in 2005 despite the town's possession of one single fax machine. The move may have had to do with the generals' irrational fears of invasion, but its timing—the departure began at exactly 6:37 A.M.—is thought to have been regarded as auspicious.

Everything Is Broken
A Tale of Catastrophe in Burma
by Emma Larkin
Penguin, 288 pp., $25.95

Aung San Suu Kyi, November 16, 2010

SOE THAN WIN / AFP / GETTY IMAGES / NEWSCOM

Astrology is as good a way as any to understand the regime. In the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis in 2008, Larkin reached areas devastated by the storm. To survive, humans clung to animals and even poisonous snakes for hours in thrashing rain, then walked dazed and naked for days across countryside erased of landmarks. A man whose wife and four daughters perished committed suicide by bashing his head against a tree. Meanwhile, Than Shwe refused to take phone calls from the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon. American and other naval ships sat in the Indian Ocean hoping to deliver aid. Access was refused—and in most of the country the regime carried out a referendum on a constitution drafted to preserve its power and further marginalize the opposition.

Massive protests led by Burma's revered Buddhist monks have failed to budge the regime. When an unexpected rise in fuel and food prices led to protests in 2007, monks led the processions of peaceful marchers along Rangoon's streets chanting the *Metta Sutta*, the Buddhist discourse of "loving kindness." After deliberating, senior monks decided to institute the *thabeik hmauk*, or overturn their alms bowls, a serious sanction which prevented the junta and its families from giving alms, a necessary step toward achieving Nirvana. Undeterred, the regime sent in the army: Several hundred, perhaps even a thousand, were killed—and the population of the monasteries has been cut in half as frightened monks gave up their robes.

In a well-known Burmese fable, a man who sees a respected member of the clergy violating his vows learns to deny what he has seen with his own eyes. It is a form of denial applied even to those with good intentions: "Even people like you," one Burmese tells Larkin, "who come here and ask us what we need and write things down in your notebook . . . I think sometimes that maybe they were never here and that I just imagined them."

With Aung San Suu Kyi's release, it is hard not to be hopeful about Burma, but it is also unclear how much latitude the regime will give her, and for how long. The *Irrawaddy*, a leading exile newspaper, is already reporting that newspapers inside Burma have been shut down for reporting on Suu Kyi's activities. With luck, Emma Larkin, who is also the author of the excellent *Finding George Orwell in Burma* (2005), will have better news to report in the future. ♦

Ellen Bork is director of democracy and human rights at the Foreign Policy Initiative.

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B&A

She's the One

Jane Austen's greatness is a truth universally acknowledged. **BY BARTON SWAIM**

Felicity Jones as Catherine Morland in 'Northanger Abbey' (2007)

When Jane Austen died in July 1817, aged 41, she had achieved moderate fame as a writer. In the previous six years, four of her novels had been published. She had been the subject of a long and highly favorable review in one of the country's most respected journals, the *Quarterly Review*, and the Prince Regent was said to be "a great admirer" of her works, keeping sets of her novels at each of his residences.

Yet just a few years later, she was forgotten. Almost nothing was published by or about her during the 1820s, although a few admirers, among them Samuel Taylor Coleridge, quietly enjoyed her books. In the 1830s, Jane's brother and sister, satisfied that their sister's fame was now irretrievably a thing of the past, were only too happy to sell five of the six copyrights in their possession to the publisher Richard Bentley. Bentley kept a small stock of Austen novels in circulation, and by the early 1840s, he had created a market for her books. It was a small one, though, and when the copyright of each expired (*Sense and Sensibility* in 1839, *Pride and Prejudice* in 1841, *Mansfield Park* in 1842, *Emma* and *Northanger Abbey* in 1857, and *Persuasion* in 1860), the publishing world didn't seem to notice.

Jane's Fame
How Jane Austen Conquered the World
by Claire Harman
Holt, 304 pp., $26

Jane's reputation rose slowly throughout the 1850s and '60s. Tennyson and G.H. Lewes were fervent admirers in England—both early "Janeites," a term coined much later—as was William Dean Howells over here. Mostly, though, Austen's books occupied a niche market. Her caucus of followers grew increasingly evangelistic, but it took a long time to kill off the idea that her novels were little more than formulaic period romances. In the 1860s, it was still possible for an Englishman to know nothing about her. James Edward Austen-Leigh, the author's nephew and first genuine biographer, remembered a verger at Winchester Cathedral expressing bewilderment that so many people wanted to see "Jane Austen's tomb."

"Pray, Sir," the verger asked, "can you tell me whether there was anything particular about that lady?"

The turning point, as Claire Harman explains in this excellent new book, came in 1870 with the publication of the *Memoir of Jane Austen*, a work reluctantly undertaken by Austen-Leigh after friends and relatives convinced him that his aunt's life deserved greater attention. The *Memoir* was a surprising success. Soon there were demands for more editions of the novels, for more information about Austen herself, and even for unfinished fiction and juvenilia.

By the 1890s, editions of Jane Austen's novels had become widely available. At the turn of the century, according to one anonymous reviewer, "every man of intellectual pretensions either likes to read her books or thinks it necessary to apologize if he does not"—a state of affairs that's held true ever since. In 2010, it's possible to think the Brontës preposterous and cloying, to think Thackeray cold and pretentious, and to dislike Dickens's long-winded moralizing. It's simply not possible for a literate person to think poorly of Jane Austen.

Harman's book is an attempt to answer the question, How did it happen? How did Austen go from being the author of a few half-remembered Regency-era romances to one of the most hallowed names in English literature? Austen, after all, wasn't one of those writers who, like Blake or Kafka, were misunderstood or ignored by their own age but later given posthumous esteem. Austen hasn't just achieved her due; she has become a permanent international celebrity, a universally recognizable brand, an obsession among Anglophiles all over the globe. She is the subject of scores of biographies, her works analyzed in thousands of liter- ▽

Barton Swaim is the author of Scottish Men of Letters and the New Public Sphere: 1802-1834.

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ary-critical articles and monographs, and her novels have inspired more box office successes than any other 19th-century writer. All this from an author whose oeuvre extends to six novels, each of which concerns the affairs of (to quote Austen herself) "three or four families in a country village."

The chief delight of *Jane's Fame* is that time and again we're reminded of why Austen's (let's admit it) utterly predictable plots are nevertheless so deeply satisfying. There is her marvelous way of combining tender-hearted warmth with a clear-eyed understanding of human motivations. There is the seemingly unconscious ease with which she constructs complex narratives: Her novels don't strike you as having been composed so much as told or remembered. "Of all great writers," wrote Virginia Woolf, "[Austen] is the most difficult to catch in the act of greatness."

The most important reason for Austen's near-universal appeal, however, is also the most obvious: Austen's novels are love stories. It's certainly true that her plots have all the elements of modern romance novels, but they also contain (as Harman writes) "matter for a lifetime's rumination on relations between the sexes." Austen dealt with a limited sphere of themes, as everybody knows: The Napoleonic Wars are hardly anywhere in her novels, and attempts to find social or political messages in them—I'm thinking of Patricia Rozema's film version of *Mansfield Park* (1999)—must strain to do so. But Austen dealt exquisitely and unforgettably with the fears, desires, and false expectations attendant upon the passage from early adulthood to marriage—a theme, if you can call it that, touching just about every question worth thinking about.

And she did it all without saying a word, explicitly, about sex—an absence that, as Harman is right to say, "leaves her books charged with sexual feeling." That goes a long way toward explaining the improbable rise of Austenmania at the end of the last century. It turns out there are more insights into the nature of love and eros in *Pride and Prejudice* than are dreamt of in Freud's philosophy. ♦

B&A

Bloody New England

The sachem Metacom nearly ended the experiment. **BY DAVID AIKMAN**

MPI / GETTY IMAGES

Among the many curious episodes of New England's early history, about the only event that has struck a chord among most Americans—at least the few who are conscious of their historical past—is the Salem Witch Trials of the 1690s. Beyond that, much of the first century and a half of America's emergence towards statehood is a murky blank, perhaps smudged in the later decades by the French and Indian War of the late 1750s.

King Philip's War
Colonial Expansion, Native Resistance, and the End of Indian Sovereignty
by Daniel R. Mandell
Johns Hopkins, 176 pp., $45

This is unfortunate because one of the most terrifying threats to the survival of the colonists lodged precariously in the New England coast and hinterland was a conflagration called King Philip's War, which lasted from 1675 to 1677. The war, of course, was eventually won by the colonists, but at a huge price: Of the approximately 80,000 residents of New England at the time, including both colonists and Indians, more than 10 percent—9,000 men, women, and children—lost their lives. One third of these were English immigrants to the New World. An incredible 52 of New England's 90 towns were attacked, and 17 razed to the ground. (The list of pillaged towns, to be sure, does not include the numerous far-flung trading posts and infant settlement communities that were also attacked and burned.)

The Native Americans paid an even higher price for their rebellion against the colonists. Thousands of them were packed off to slave labor in Bermuda, and then to the sugar plantations of the Caribbean. Those fortunate enough to convince the English of their loyalty found their traditional tribal territory and their fishing preserves nibbled at inexorably over subsequent years by sometimes-shadowy real estate deals.

In this lucid and enthralling account of the war, Daniel Mandell refrains from haranguing the reader, even though it will make few of us proud to learn how much of New England land was surrendered to Europeans in real estate deals characterized by the drunken stupor (usually induced by rum) into which the Indians had

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been lured before signing away their birthright. With hindsight, King Philip's War was an almost classic case of ethnic mutual misunderstanding and a clash of cultures. Both sides understood sovereignty in a different way: the English as a perpetual cession of property and land usage to subjects of a king located 3,000 miles away, and the Native Americans as land usage inherited over generations by disparate tribal communities. Both sides exhibited bitter rivalries within their own communities—with Rhode Island often declining to be included in the generalized defense of English communities against the Indians, and the Indians themselves facing savage onslaughts in their rear from a fierce rival tribe, the Mohawks.

As Mandell makes clear, however, neither side at the outset wanted a full-scale war, and there were wise heads on both sides who might have headed it off. Once the first blood was spilled, however—Native American blood—the desire for vengeance against the English galvanized the Wampanoag followers of the sachem (chief) Metacom, or King Philip, into an orgy of bloodletting rendered more frightful by the savagery of the combat.

The Native Americans would routinely capture their foes and subsequently torture them to death, and scalping was possibly the least unpleasant of their various ways of humiliating captive adversaries. The English responded to this savagery first with dismay and horror, but later with atrocities of their own, often against undefended civilian communities. One of the few redeeming features of the colonists' culture was that, in the worst instance of white atrocity against the Indians, the culprits were brought to justice and hanged. It is, nevertheless, deeply troubling that, years after Cromwell's Commonwealth had abolished judicial torture in England, the heads of defeated Native American leaders were mounted on poles in some New England Puritan towns.

Many Puritans, including Increase Mather, speculated that the war might have been God's judgment on a rising tide of ungodliness among the Puritans. This was certainly the view of Mary Rowlandson, an English captive of King Philip and the Wampanoags for several months. Her memoir of the ordeal, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, published in 1682, was the first in a new genre in American literature, "captivity narratives," that must have rendered nervous the waves of settlers rolling on rickety wagons through Indian territory to the West a century after King Philip's War.

THE
Soveraignty and Goodneſs of
GOD,
Together with the Faithfulneſs of His Promiſes Diſplayed:
BEING A
NARRATIVE
Of the Captivity and Reſtauration of
Mrs. *Mary Rowlandſon.*
Commended by her, to all that deſire to know the Lords Doings to, & Dealings with her; eſpecially to her dear Children and Relations.
Written by her own Hand, for her private Uſe, and now made Publick at the earneſt Deſire of ſome Friends, and for the Benefit of the Afflicted.
The Second Edition.
Carefully Corrected, and Purged from abundance of Errors which eſcaped in the former Impreſſion.
BOSTON: Printed by T. Fleet, for Samuel Phillips, at the *Three Bibles* and Crown in King-Street, 1720.

MPI / GETTY IMAGES

Yet one of the most fascinating revelations of Mandell's account is that readers in England sided unmistakably with the Native Americans against the Puritans. This was no doubt due to the return to power in England of King Charles II in 1660, a monarch whose own father had been put to death by Puritans in 1649. One of the intriguing details of this account is that one of the regicides of Charles I, in retirement and on the run at that time, turned out to be a hero of the defense of one of the New England garrisons.

The judgment of history, of course, particularly academic history, has long since painted the Puritans into an undeservedly unattractive corner of American history. By a century and a half after King Philip's War, New England writers were determinedly anti-Puritan, including, of course, James Fenimore Cooper (see *The Last of the Mohicans*).

Yet some of the Puritans went out of their way to be kind to the Indians, and those Indians who had become Christians, though often poorly treated by the authorities of Massachusetts during the conflict, played important roles in the subsequent defeat of King Philip by the colonists.

The colonists themselves blundered badly in their early military operations, and it wasn't until they began to employ the skills of Native Americans who were opposed to King Philip that they finally prevailed. The colonists were hugely assisted by the Mohawks, who considered themselves rivals of the Wampanoag in seeking access to the European fur trade. It was the governor of New York, Sir Edmund Andros, who secured the Mohawk alliance and rendered the colonists' ultimate defeat of King Philip inevitable. But Sir Edmund did not enjoy his fame for very long: In 1689, after the Stuarts had been overthrown in the Glorious Revolution, he was dispatched unceremoniously back to England.

Greed, lust for new territory, mutual suspicion, and misunderstanding, all these played crucial roles in the creation of King Philip's War. But there was more than enough cruelty to go round on both sides, and it is tragically ironic that Metacom was the son of Massasoit, the Indian who had done so much to help the Pilgrim Fathers establish a presence in New England in the first place. *King Philip's War*, published three-and-a-half centuries after the original conflict, puts that fact, and much else, into perspective. ♦

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B&A

Madame President

She's a centrist Republican in danger of defeat.

BY DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

When you cross-pollinate chick lit with politics, there is always the risk that the author (or reputed author) will transport her narcissism to places where it ought not be seen. Take the two novels cowritten by—you still have to call her senator—Barbara Boxer. In *A Time to Run*, Boxer introduces innocent readers to her alter ego, California Democrat Ellen Fischer, a perky Bay Area children's advocate who doesn't want to run for the Senate after her congressman-husband dies in a car accident, but reluctantly becomes a candidate after a party bigfoot presses her to run, saying, "You're respected and loved. Most important of all, when it comes to mudslinging, you're bulletproof."

Oh yeah. And Boxer's villain—a conservative writer for the, ahem, *San Francisco Chronicle*—warns her, "Politics is not for the likes of you. It's dirty." In the next book, Fischer's new husband calls her a "cunning little vixen." The Senate Democratic leader tells Fischer that she has "personally raised the integrity bar. People are asking themselves, if they can't trust you, then who can they trust?" The novel ends with Fischer's name being floated for the vice presidency.

I didn't want to know that Boxer actually thinks such things, or that she doesn't have anyone on her staff who could tell her the books were a bad idea.

Political chick lit, however, can be done right. In her roman à clef *Dog Days*, Ana Marie Cox, the original Wonkette, serves up Melanie Thorton, a 28-year-old Democratic political operative messed up with ghost-blogging, her BlackBerry, and someone else's husband. For political junkies, Cox put her satirical spin on choice low moments from the 2004 presidential campaign. *Dog Days* also hits the usual modern chick-lit buttons: It's a breezy read, there are cool shoes, the heroine drinks too much, the love interest is a heel; but then, there is redemption.

Eighteen Acres
A Novel
by Nicolle Wallace
Atria, 336 pp., $25

Some might have expected former Bush/McCain handler Nicolle Wallace to follow in Cox's footsteps by using her debut novel to lampoon career nemeses. Some might expect Wallace to show no mercy for Sarah Palin: After all, in *Going Rogue*, Palin skewers Wallace, who set up the Alaska governor's pivotal (in a bad way) interview with Katie Couric. According to Palin, Wallace pitched the Couric sit-down, telling Palin, "Katie really likes you. She's a working mom and admires you as a working mom." Palin also floats Wallace's name as the possible leaker who told CNN that John McCain's running mate was "going rogue."

Forget personal payback: A catfight with Palin would sell books. But *Eighteen Acres* is not a dirty-politics exposé; if anything, it's about teamwork, imperfect people trying to do the right thing, and an acknowledgment that working on the White House's 18-acre grounds is the privilege of a lifetime. Here you see the White House that George W. Bush would want to project. Sure, there's some backbiting, but all of the players have some integrity. There is no in-house villain—but there are to-die-for accessories, starting with a $2,000 Dior purse.

Wallace presents a uniquely feminine look at the White House through the lenses of three characters. Charlotte Kramer is America's first female president. Kramer is a Republican, but an understated Republican. Melanie Kingston, Kramer's chief of staff, is Wallace's doppelgänger. Attractive, petite, always well turned out and calm, Kingston introduces the reader to the daily juggling and panic that fill long days that turn into nights in America's hub of political power. Date much? No, but there is a new reporter who seems interesting and interested. TV correspondent Dale Smith is having an affair with the president's husband. Talk about sitting on a hot story.

The plot twists around Kramer's reelection campaign at a time when pundits have written off her presidency as "squandered . . . swallowed by scandal [and] finished." In one of the plot-driven departures from reality, the media don't pay much attention to the Kramers' disintegrating marriage, so the question as to when news of the affair will break hovers. The secretary of defense has his own baggage. A certain document remains unopened at the end of the book. (I'm thinking sequel.) And there is danger in Afghanistan, where the distaff president has turned things around. Charlotte Kramer is a gifted commander in chief, who earned "great respect up and down the military's chain of command" while rallying public support for the war by uttering difficult truths but also displaying "confidence about the prospects for victory." This truly is the White House the way you want it to be.

The real do-over element of the novel comes in a certain presidential running mate, Tara Meyers. As Wallace writes, "Melanie disliked everything about Tara. She was loud, tacky, and rude. She seemed to calculate the least presidential approach to every situation and pursue it with vigor." And unlike the tasteful Melanie, Tara always picks the wrong outfit.

Debra J. Saunders writes a syndicated column for the San Francisco Chronicle.

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Later, Melanie acknowledges that, in many ways, Tara is "a natural fit"—like Kramer, a centrist: "And they saw eye-to-eye on the issues Charlotte was most passionate about." Sarah Palin? Actually, Tara Meyers is a New York Democrat whom Kramer picks to energize her chances and appeal to a wider swath of voters. She's half-Palin, half-Joe Lieberman (whom McCain wanted to name as his running mate). Just how did delegates at the Republican National Convention react to this unconventional surprise choice? "Tara's speech had electrified the Republican convention." Fact and fiction meet. ♦

B&A

Literary Suicide

How multiculturalism strangles freedom of speech.

BY ELIZABETH POWERS

Salman Rushdie confers with Bono, 2003

Daniel Pipes's *The Rushdie Affair: The Novel, the Ayatollah, and the West* appeared in 1990, when tensions provoked by *The Satanic Verses* were still running high. Even after two decades it remains the most balanced account of the events, but it bears mentioning here for another reason: While Pipes pointed out the tendency of radicals to dominate the "Islamic arena," and asserted that the affair marked the emergence of Muslims living in Europe as a political force, he concluded on a sanguine note: "The ayatollah's accomplishments must not be exaggerated. The global fear of early 1989 is not likely to be soon repeated. . . . *The Satanic Verses* is likely to remain without match."

As Kenan Malik puts the matter here, however, "the Rushdie affair was a warning that the seeds of the Iranian Revolution were being scattered successfully across the globe."

There have been more spectacular and deadlier instances of worldwide "Muslim outrage" since 1989, but the Muhammad cartoon protests of 2005 and 2006 hewed to the pattern established by the Rushdie affair. This time it was not a single government picking a fight with a private individual in a foreign country, but the protests likewise resulted in numerous deaths and death threats, provoked a diplomatic confrontation with "the West," and had enormous economic repercussions. The major difference lies in the response of the West: In 1989, it had stood (more or less) solidly behind Rushdie and the principle of freedom of speech, but by 2006, governments and the opinion classes had, in Malik's words, "internalized the fatwa." Any criticism of Islam by Westerners was considered insensitive. Thus, another manufactured debate of 2006, over the filming in London of the novel *Brick Lane*, led feminist Germaine Greer to take the side of the protesters, proclaiming that "the community has the moral right to keep the filmmakers out." According to Malik, Greer doubted the "authenticity" of novelist Monica Ali to "speak for" Muslims.

We should not be surprised. Germaine Greer, after all, represents the rise in the past several decades of those who, without elected mandate, claim to "speak for" certain constituencies: think National Organization for Women or Al Sharpton. The result has been the erosion of a founding stone of liberal democracy, freedom of speech, as special interest groups have effectively outlawed criticism by rebranding it as "hate speech." Muslims, too, according to Malik, are now treated by governments and the opinion classes as a "singular, uniform entity"—and death to those who differ.

From Fatwa to Jihad, by the Indian-born, Manchester-raised Londoner Malik, portrays how this lethal form of political correctness grew from the balkanization of society. Part coming-of-age story, it also depicts a fall from grace: the abandonment by the contemporary left of the ideals of common humanity and universal rights—"secular humanism"—for multiculturalism—"treating people differently in order to treat them equally." If that sounds Orwellian, it should, because multiculturalism is the smiley face of totalitarianism.

Malik was 21 in 1981 when *Midnight's Children* made Salman Rushdie a literary star. He also became a hero to Malik and others of Asian background in Britain, not for "his incendiary assaults on

From Fatwa to Jihad
The Rushdie Affair and Its Aftermath: How a Group of British Extremists Attacked a Novel and Ignited Radical Islam
by Kenan Malik
Melville, 288 pp., $25

Elizabeth Powers is editing a collection of essays on the intellectual origins of freedom of speech in the 18th century.

EVAN AGOSTINI / GETTY IMAGES

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Islam," but for "his brutal battering of racism." In the 1970s, the disaffected among this in-between generation called themselves "blacks" in solidarity with the Black Panthers and also with the Afro-Caribbean immigrants who were likewise experiencing discrimination in housing and employment. They had few religious inclinations, and their radicalism was defined in opposition to mosque and the traditionalists, including the views of the latter concerning the role of women.

But by the end of the 1980s, there was a vast turnaround, and disaffection found a new home in fundamentalist Islam. The Rushdie affair, as Pipes noted, is replete with ironies: Rushdie, whose oeuvre abounds with his dislike of the West and especially of "the great American fist" (as in *The Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey*), had denounced the shah and supported Iran's Islamic Revolution of 1979. The fundamentalists protesting *The Satanic Verses* in 1988 and 1989, however, viewed Rushdie as another lackey of the Great Satan.

This turnaround has everything to do with the pernicious efforts of government, including that of Margaret Thatcher, to "reach out" to minorities. Malik offers a ground-level view of events during the period when Britain was experiencing race troubles with the entry into the country of large numbers of "dark-skinned" immigrants. Old-fashioned British trade unionism had been instrumental in helping them gain rights in housing and employment; with economic assimilation and the decline of trade unionism, however, the New Left found "surrogate proletariats" in the social movements, which began putting pressure on the increasingly affluent state. Instead of engaging with immigrant communities as citizens, the government turned to self-selected "community representatives," who had much to gain in position and funding. The Muslim Council of Britain, founded in 1997, has by now been accepted by government and media as "the authentic voice of the Muslim community," and "advisers" recommended by this council infiltrate bureaucracies and shape government attitudes. In 2000, the Parekh Report concluded that Britain was "both a community of citizens and a community of communities, both a liberal and a multicultural society." Further, since citizens had "differing needs," equal treatment required "full account to be taken of their differences." Assimilation has been replaced by a policy of "culturally sensitive discrimination." As Malik points out, "Once political power and financial resources became allocated by ethnicity, then people began to identify themselves in terms of their ethnicity, and only their ethnicity." In this environment, Islamist groups have grown in strength.

Into this account of the erosion of freedom of speech and the rise of multiculturalist pieties, especially on the left, Malik weaves stories of several blighted lives, including London's 7/7 bombers. No surprise here: British recruits to Islamic fundamentalism did not grow up in poverty, nor did they suffer from broken families or occupational failures. Indeed, most appeared to have led exceedingly middle-class lives.

Though he does not distinguish between the British recruits to fundamentalist Islam and the hardened criminals who staff the terrorist cells from Algeria to Afghanistan, Malik inadvertently draws attention to the precarious fate of young men in the modern world today, principally the educated among them, who believe they have no stake in a system that has rewarded them so well. This is not a new story: The angry young man has been a staple of literature and popular culture since at least Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther*. So Malik echoes what Pipes and other scholars have asserted; namely, that the "rage of Islam" owes less to religion than to nihilist ideas that have wide purchase in Western societies.

Indeed, the secular humanism Malik advocates, critical as it is of existing institutions, is an agent of such nihilism. Salman Rushdie was a powerful voice in articulating this nihilism and its contempt for the values of liberal democracy. However odd Rushdie's own fate is—Pipes predicted that he would not henceforth lead a normal life—the lesson of the Rushdie Affair remains more relevant than ever: The failure to defend Western values and institutions simply nurtures contempt for them among the disaffected. ♦

B&A

Man in the Arena

A classic boxing story with a heart of irony.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

If you told me you didn't like movies about boxing, I'd have to answer that you didn't really like movies. A good fight picture can generate a raw emotional experience that practically defines the effect of the cinema itself at its most addictive. Every boxing movie basically tells the same story: A poor man with very little going for him but will and determination finds the strength within to risk everything in an effort to transcend his hardscrabble circumstances. The boxer is the great fantasy figure of American movies—the ordinary hero.

The Fighter
Directed by David O. Russell

Even Martin Scorsese's extraordinarily unpleasant *Raging Bull*, widely and incorrectly considered the greatest boxing movie, tells pretty much the same story except that its protagonist is a psychotic louse rather than a decent guy. Critics love *Raging Bull* because it provides the visceral thrill of a fight picture without the sentimental stuff about the little guy who makes it big. But

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really, there's little difference between being manipulated to wring tears and being manipulated to invoke a feeling of cultural superiority over oh-so-physical goons who could (and maybe did) beat up any bespectacled movie critic.

The great surprise of *The Fighter*, a new and entirely irresistible entry in the genre, is that it is far more like *Rocky* than *Raging Bull*. It was directed, and sensationally well, by David O. Russell, a filmmaker whose previous work (*Flirting with Disaster*, *Three Kings*, *I Heart Huckabees*) so drips with multifarious layers of irony that he would seem the last person on earth capable of making a head-on, populist, working-class fight picture. And yet that is exactly what *The Fighter* is, and why it's so wonderful.

It's actually the story of two real-life boxers from the hardscrabble section of Lowell, Mass.—Micky Ward (Mark Wahlberg) and his older half-brother, Dicky Eklund (Christian Bale). The movie begins in 1993 with both of them on a false upswing. Micky is about to appear in his first televised bout. Dicky is being followed around by an HBO film crew more than a decade after he knocked Sugar Ray Leonard down. In short order, the good news turns out to be bad news. Micky ends up being brutalized in a fight against a boxer who has nearly 20 pounds on him. And Dicky, who serves as Micky's trainer and coach, isn't on the comeback trail, as he fantasizes; he's actually being filmed for an HBO documentary on crack addiction.

Micky's manager is his mother Alice, a hard-drinking, chain-smoking, leathery party girl in her 50s played by Melissa Leo in a performance as sharp and bracing as straight vinegar. Micky has had it beaten into him by Alice and Dicky that no one but family can be trusted, and so he is putty in their irresponsible hands.

As is often the case with a boxing picture, the man at the center of *The Fighter* is sweet and naïve and strangely passive—a necessary bit of fiction because, after all, what he does for a living is try to beat other men

Mark Wahlberg, Christian Bale

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

senseless, and to show him with an angry or nasty edge would make him frightening and difficult to identify with (as in *Raging Bull*). Wahlberg has given exactly this performance before, in the touchingly improbable real-life football movie *Invincible*; it was winning there and it's winning here. But though he makes us root for Micky, he's not all that interesting.

The dramatic interest and tension in *The Fighter* come from the people and places that surround him—the rickety house that doubles as a gym, his dumpy apartment next door to a prison, Alice and her overflowing ashtray and her emotional manipulations, the cruelty of the vicious baby mama with whom Micky has a daughter, the comedy provided by Micky's seven hapless sisters.

Mostly, though, there is crazy, pathetic, narcissistic, addled, horrible, and yet agonizingly lovable Dicky. It's one of the meatiest roles in recent American movies and it is going to win Christian Bale an Oscar. Bale is one of those performers easy to admire and difficult to love, because he's so publicly full of ludicrous melodramatic torment about the demands of acting. Here, he manages for the first time since his pre-adolescent work nearly a quarter-century ago as the spoiled British kid trapped in a Japanese prison camp outside Shanghai in *Empire of the Sun* to make us care deeply about the character he's playing.

Bale invests Dicky with a crazed energy, and *The Fighter* shares it. Micky has to escape from Dicky to prosper, but he needs Dicky because his self-destructive brother has the understanding of the chess game going on inside the ring that Micky lacks. There's no way of telling how much of this portrait is true to real life, and I have to say, it doesn't feel like it's true. But it's more than enough for a moviegoer that we want it, desperately, to be true, just as we want to believe in the fantasy that a man with no prospects in life can go from being a loser to a winner with a single punch. ♦

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"Federal telecommunications regulators approved new rules Tuesday that would for the first time give the federal government formal authority to regulate Internet traffic, although how much or for how long remained unclear." —Wall Street Journal, *December 21, 2010*

Older Lawmakers Still Unsure About 'Net Neutrality' Rules

'This Whole Internet Thing Makes Me Uncomfortable'

By **Amy Schatz**

WASHINGTON—While many members of Congress have been more than willing to share their opinions about the decision by the Federal Communications Commission to initiate partial regulation of the Internet, known commonly as net neutrality, several representatives and senators have confessed to being ignorant, skeptical, and even fearful of the issue. "I just don't like the sound of it," says Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.). "To me, it sounds like something out of the movies. You know, everyone is all excited about it—that is, until the robots take over."

"For crying out loud, I just learned how to email," complains retiring senator Jim Bunning (R-Ky.). "Now I'm supposed to know the ins and outs of net neutrality? Are you [expletive] kidding me?" Mr. Bunning did say, however, that he has become fond of emailing—primarily old jokes and rumors. He adds, "I'm still waiting for that check from Bill Gates for helping beta-test his software."

Some lawmakers seemed uninterested in the issue. "I've heard this all before," says Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ). "My late colleague Ted Stevens told us how this all works: It's a series of tubes. And from what my staff tells me, net neutrality would be like getting those tubes tied." In fact, more tech-savvy members of Congress have been advising their less familiar colleagues on how to handle the topic in front of the media. "What I tell my more venerable friends is this," explains Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). "If a member of the media asks for your opinion on net neutrality, throw them a one-liner like, 'There's nothing neutral about it,' and then run."

Others insist that between terrorism and health care briefings, they just don't have the time to understand the nature of net neutrality. "Just get to the point," says Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.). "How will net neutrality affect, hypothetically, a player's ability to place online bets, double down, or split aces?" Asks Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND), "Does net neutrality make it easier or harder for me to enjoy 'America's Funniest Home Videos' online? If the answer is easier, then I am all for it. Because I just can't get enough of 'cat falls off TV.'" His colleague from Maryland, Democratic senator Barbara Mikulski, agrees. "The only thing that matters to me is my ability to download quickly episodes of 'Sons of

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'Surprise! Surprise! Surprise!'

40 Years Later, Pvt. Gomer Pyle Finally Comes Out

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